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CHRISTIAN SOBRIETY:

BEING

EIGHT SERMONS

ON

TITUS II. 6.

PREACHED WITH A SPECIAL VIEW
TO THE
BENEFIT OF THE YOUNG MEN
USUALLY ATTENDING THE PUBLIC WORSHIP
AT THE
WEST CHURCH in BOSTON.

Publiſhed more particularly at their Deſire, and dedicated to them.

By *JONATHAN MAYHEW*, D.D.
PASTOR OF THE SAID CHURCH.

MAKE no tarrying to turn to the LORD, and put not off from day to day; for ſuddenly ſhall the wrath of the LORD come forth, and in thy ſecurity thou ſhalt be deſtroyed---My ſon, gather inſtruction from thy YOUTH up: So ſhalt thou find wiſdom till thine OLD AGE.

JESUS the Son of SIRACH.

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:
Printed by RICHARD and SAMUEL DRAPER, in Newbury-Street: EDES and GILL, in Queen-Street; and THOMAS and JOHN FLEET, at the *Heart* & *Crown* in Cornhill, 1763.

The Author

To the YOUNG MEN who uſually attend his Miniſtry; and, more particularly,

To thoſe of them, at whoſe REQUEST the following Diſcourſes are publiſhed.

My dear young Brethren,

I HAVE now before me a paper directed to me, ſigned by a conſiderable number of you; in which you expreſs both a full perſwaſion, and a grateful ſenſe of my friendly deſign in preaching the following ſermons: At the ſame time deſiring a copy for the preſs, in terms at once too reſpectful to me to be here repeated, and too plainly indicating a ſerious turn of mind, to permit me to deny your requeſt.†

I SHOULD, indeed, do an injury to myſelf, if I denied that my aim in them was, as you ſuppoſe, "the bettering your minds and morals." And the manner in which you attended to them, when preached, together with your being ſo well ſatisfied with them as to deſire to read them in print, affords ground to hope that, by the bleſſing of GOD, the fountain of truth, light and wiſdom,

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† The paper here referred to, was ſigned by about fifty perſons of the younger ſort.

The ſubject is handled in ſuch a manner as to give you a general, comprehenſive idea of true religion, with its advantages and importance: I mean, of *Chriſtianity*, according to my own conceptions of it. The ſcheme or plan of the ſermons is very extenſive: It opens a wide field, almoſt boundleſs on every ſide, and preſenting numberleſs objects to the view. Whoever looks over the contents of them, will ſee that they are not deficient in point of variety, whatever other faults they may be juſtly charged with. But, in this way of treating the ſubject, it was impoſſible to handle any particular doctrine or precept of the goſpel fully, or with accuracy and preciſion. Had I pretended to handle the various branches of religion here touched upon, in this manner, each ſermon would have ſwelled to a folio; and they muſt have employed more years than I was days, in compoſing and preaching them.

The general deſign of them, *viz.* to inſtruct the Young, and, by the bleſſing of God, to form their minds to the love and practice of true religion, cannot but be approved by all wiſe and good men; how much ſoever I have failed in the method, or execution. The inſtruction of the YOUNG, in order to their being well principled, and acting a proper part in life, is a thing of the utmoſt importance to themſelves and to ſociety. This has, accordingly, been a favourite, a principal object with ſome of the wiſeſt men, in their reſpective ages and countries. Three ſuch perſons in particular, at once preſent themſelves to my mind; SOLOMON, SOCRATES and CICERO.

THE firſt of theſe, SOLOMON among the JEWS, had a very particular attention to the YOUNG, in his invaluable writings; a treaſure more to be prized than millions of gold and ſilver. He himſelf informs us, and it is obvious from the moſt curſory view of them, that their more immediate and ſpecial deſign was, "to give to the YOUNG MAN knowledge and underſtanding."

The ſecond, SOCRATES, ſo renowned among the GREEKS for his wiſdom and virtue, is alſo known to have devoted his time and great talents, chiefly to the inſtruction of YOUNG MEN. Tho' he left nothing in writing, which is come down to us; yet authentic hiſtory gives us this account of him: And the dialogues of PLATO, his learned diſciple, in which the ſentiments and diſcourſes of SOCRATES are repreſented, clearly evince the ſame thing. He was, however, in that ſuperſtitious, corrupt and idolatrous, tho' polite age, accuſed, tried and condemned as a perverter of the YOUTH of ATHENS; more particularly, as it is ſaid, becauſe he taught them the UNITY of GOD; ridiculing polytheiſm, with the numberleſs ſuperſtitions & follies which time, ignorance and prejudice had conſecrated, as the ſacred myſteries of religion; i. e. in other words, he was conſidered as an impious *heretic* and *blaſphemer*. This it was, that enraged the prieſts, the politicians, and even the poets of ATHENS, againſt that extraordinary perſon; and finally brought him, as a martyr for the truth, to drink the fatal *hemlock* in a jayl: A poor requital for ſuch important ſervices to his country! But thus it is, that "the world gives;"—thus, that it often rewards its benefactors, of whom it is not worthy. And even the SON of GOD himſelf, was by wicked hands crucified and ſlain as a *blaſphemer*, for aſſerting that the only true GOD was his FATHER; thereby making himſelf, as the prieſts maliciouſly accuſed him, equal with GOD!

Cicero among the Romans, the third of theſe renowned men, the wiſeſt and beſt of his time and nation, had a ſpecial view to the benefit of young men, in divers of his admirable writings; particularly in that very valuable book his Offices, inſcribed to his ſon Marcus. He alſo took great pains in ſome of his other writings, to expoſe the folly, ſuperſtition and knavery of the prieſts and augurs, and other ſuppoſed holy men of thoſe times; and to preſerve both the Old and Young from the ſad effects of their deluſions and hypocriſy, tho' he was himſelf One of their *order*. He was, accordingly, accounted an *heretic* by them. And tho' he did not fall at laſt as a martyr directly for true religion; yet he fell as one of the moſt glorious advocates for liberty, that the world ever ſaw: An honor next to that of ſuffering martyrdom for religion; and, in ſome ſort, the ſame thing; true religion compriſing in it the love of liberty, and of One's country; and the hatred of all tyranny and oppreſſion.

It is evident, moreover, from the epiſtles of the great apoſtle Paul, and of

JOHN the beloved diſciple of our Lord, that both of them had a particular attention to the YOUNG, in their writings: Not to mention the many excellent divines, or other learned and good men, who, in later ages, have devoted a great part of their time, and their noble talents, to the ſervice of GOD and their generation, in this way. To ſay the leaſt, therefore, I have no occaſion to bluſh, for having employed my meaner talents with a particular view to the benefit of my YOUNG brethren, when I conſider theſe illuſtrious examples: Eſpecially, when I alſo reflect on what paſſed betwixt our LORD and PETER, when the former, the chief Shepherd, was juſt aſcending to his FATHER and our FATHER, to his GOD and our GOD. "JESUS ſaith to Simon "Peter, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou "me more than theſe? He ſaith unto "him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that "I love thee. He ſaith unto him, FEED "MY LAMBS."

WHILE others, who are rich in wiſdom, caſt in of their abundance into the treaſury and offerings of GOD, for the immediate ſervice of the YONUG, the

LAMBS of CHRIST's fold ; I may be permitted, like the poor widow, of my penury to caſt in a mite or two. In which reſpect, I may alſo accomodate to myſelf, and adopt the words of the laſt-mentioned apoſtle, PETER, originally ſpoken with another view, on a particular occaſion : "Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have give I you." If what I here offer, as my own, is neither gold, ſilver nor precious ſtones ; yet, I truſt, it is not wholly droſs, wood, hay or ſtubble. And, mean as it is, I am already aſſured, my beloved young brethren, that you will not deſpiſe it : Nor do I doubt, but that the infinitely good and merciful GOD will graciouſly accept it thro' JESUS CHRIST, as ſincerely intended for his glory.

IT is ſaid by ſome, that theſe times are very corrupt and degenerate, in compariſon of thoſe of our fore-fathers ; and particularly, that the YOUTH of theſe days are remarkably light and vain, looſe and profligate, both in principle and manners. There is doubtleſs always room, and great occaſion in this preſent evil world, for reformation. I am not certain, however, that the above-mentioned charge is ſtrictly juſt: Poſſibly they who bring it, may not "inquire wiſely concerning the former times," or the preſent, when they think that thoſe were ſo much "better than theſe." Be that as it may; yet I am perſuaded, the moſt likely way to produce a reformation, is not to rail at the times, or to make ſuch invidious compariſons betwixt the age preſent, and thoſe which are paſt. I have, therefore, wholly declined this kind of *rhetoric* and *declamation* in theſe diſcourſes: Contenting myſelf with plainly telling you the truth and your duty; and urging it upon you by ſuch conſiderations, as are at all times proper. But if there is any real foundation for ſuch a charge againſt the YOUTH of the preſent age, theſe diſcourſes will be ſo much the more *ſeaſonable*, and claim your attention accordingly.

I HAVE addreſſed you in them, and endeavoured to treat you, as reaſonable creatures. You will not, it is hoped, think it leſs incumbent upon you to ſhew yourſelves men by your conduct, tho' but young, than it was upon me to treat you as ſuch. To the many arguments and motives to that end, uſed in theſe diſcourſes, let me here ſubjoin, that a number of you have been bleſt with a *liberal* and *learned*, as well as religious education; and, that the more is expected of you both by God and man, on this account. Take heed, my brethren, that you do not any of you diſgrace your education, and bring a reproach upon that reſpectable ſociety the College, whoſe public honors you have received, by a conduct unworthy both of that and yourſelves; — either by a vicious and profligate, or even by a low, ſordid and vulgar behaviour. In either of which caſes, eſpecially the former, you may be aſſured, that what would otherwiſe be for your honor, will, in the end, turn to your ſhame and reproach. I ſay this, you know, as your friend, not as your enemy.

The great regard and kindneſs with which I have been treated by your parents, and the honoured and beloved people of my paſtoral charge in general, lay me under ſome peculiar obligations, not only to them, but to you; — to do whatever in me lies, to promote your honor, your temporal and eternal good. If, therefore,

fore, you ſhould think my private advice on any particular occaſion, or my good wiſhes and my prayers worth any thing, you may depend upon having them; the former, whenever it is asked, and the two latter without it.

LET me juſt add, that if any of you, after hearing, and requeſting the publication of theſe diſcourſes on chriſtian ſobriety, ſhould conduct yourſelves unſoberly, unrighteouſly and ungodly in the world, inſtead of living as the grace of GOD which has appeared, teaches you to live; theſe very ſermons, and your own written, ſigned requeſt, will be as ſwift witneſſes againſt you: You will be judged out of your own mouths, like wicked ſervants; and condemned, as it were, under your own hands and ſeals. God forbid, that what is now a token for good concerning you, and a teſtimony in your favor, ſhould eventually be a means of aggravating your guilt, and inflaming your condemnation! As my beloved brethren I warn you; at the ſame time hoping "better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation:" Being

Your ſincere Friend
and Brother,
Jonathan Mayhew.

BOSTON, February
1763.

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☞ See Corrections at the End.

SERMON I.

Obſervations on TITUS and the Epiſtle to him. The deſign and method of the following Diſcourſes exhibited. Remarks on the terms *young men*, and *ſober-minded*: And, what is implied in *exhorting* them to be ſo, particularly ſhewn.

TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

TITUS, to whom the apoſtle Paul wrote this ſhort, but excellent epiſtle, is generally ſuppoſed to have been converted to the chriſtian faith by his miniſtry: And it is doubtleſs with reference hereto, that the apoſtle calls him "his own ſon, after the common faith [*]". Titus being a young man of great hopes, when he firſt became a diſciple of Chriſt, St. Paul ſeems to have had a particular

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[*] Chap. i. 4.

kindneſs and regard for him; ſometimes taking him with him as his companion and aſſiſtant in the kingdom and patience of Chriſt, while he travelled from country to country, to preach his unſearchable riches among the gentiles. It appears from divers paſſages in the new teſtament, that Titus was a perſon of no ſmall conſideration among the Chriſtians of that day, even before he came to reſide at Crete; being deputed, ſometimes by one apoſtle or another, and ſometimes by an whole church, to tranſact affairs of great importance to the common cauſe of chriſtianity; which truſts he ſeems to have diſcharged with great ability and reputation.

WHETHER Titus went with St. Paul to Crete, in one of his peregrinations, as ſeems moſt probable: And whether it was by his, or the apoſtle's own miniſtry, or by that of ſome other perſon, that the goſpel was firſt planted in that iſland, is not material at preſent to be inquired, or determined. It is ſtill evident that they were, on ſome occaſion or other, both together at this populous iſland; famous long before that time, as the ſuppoſed place of Jupiter's birth; for Minos, its juſt king; for its labyrinth, its hundred cities, &c. It is now more commonly known by the name of Candy, from its chief city, founded by the Saracens; and at this day ſubject to the Turks. It is, moreover, certain that, at the time when St. Paul and Titus were together at Crete, there was a conſiderable number of chriſtian converts there; who were, 'tis likely, part Jews by birth, and part Gentiles.

RPJCB

It is ſtill farther certain, that the apoſtle being about to depart from thence, left this excellent perſon, who had by this time acquired great knowledge and experience, in Crete, to ſuperintend the affairs of the church; to regulate things there, and particularly to ordain elders, or paſtors, in all the cities wherein it ſhould be needful. "For this cauſe left I thee in Crete," ſays he, "that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the "things that are wanting, and ordain elders in "every city, as I had appointed thee".† From whence it appears that the church, or churches of Crete, were not hitherto reduced to due form, rule, or order; moſt, if not all the cities being deſtitute of regular, fixed paſtors, or overſeers.

AND here, by the way, it is natural to take notice of a groundleſs conceit of a modern ſect; to the people of which, however, God knoweth, I bear no ill will; and who, in ſome other reſpects, are rather to be commended, than blamed. The people uſually called Quakers, aſſert that it was never the intention of Chriſt the "chief ſhepherd", or of his inſpired apoſtles, that there ſhould be a certain order of men ſeparated to the goſpel-miniſtry; or regularly ſettled and ordained as paſtors, elders, or by whatever other name they are called, in particular cities and churches. Upon which ſuppoſition let them, if they can, give a plain and direct anſwer to the queſtion, For what end it was, that the apoſtle Paul left Titus at Crete? This notion of the Quakers is, in ſhort, diametrically

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† Chap. i. 5.

repugnant to many paſſages of ſcripture; and contrary to the known cuſtom in the apoſtles days, under their own eye and direction, as well as to the ſentiments and practice of all Chriſtians in general from that time to the preſent, the Quakers themſelves being excepted, who are but a novel ſect. The ſuppoſed novelty of this ſect would, however, be no ſolid objection againſt it, if its tenets and practices were truly apoſtolic. For whatever bears this ſtamp and character, has really the moſt venerable antiquity on its ſide; in compariſon of which, no other, however gloried in, is of any conſideration. But one need not ſcruple to ſay, that our modern Quaker-ſocieties, meetings or aſſemblies, wherein there are neither any ſtated paſtors, nor ſacraments, bear, in that reſpect, no reſemblance of the churches planted by the apoſtles, their companions, or their immediate followers. In all which churches in general, there were both regular paſtors, elders (or biſhops) and deacons: And, in them, the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper were adminiſtred; all nearly according to the preſent mode and practice of our churches in New-England; tho' I will not preſume to ſay, exactly ſo in every circumſtance.

St. Paul wrote this epiſtle to Titus very ſoon after he left him at Crete. As is commonly ſuppoſed, it was written by him from Macedonia, about the year of our Lord 65 or 66. He tho't proper, it ſeems, at once to ſhew his regard for Titus, and his care for the yet-unformed, unregulated churches of Crete, to ſend him this letter; containing more particular counſels and directions, probably, than he had given him verbally before; that, by having theſe in his hands in writing, to read, and to communicate to others, they might be the more ſtrictly obſerved both by him and the churches there, as they were reſpectively concerned herein. And having reminded Titus, as was before obſerved, of the general deſign with which he left him at Crete; he immediately proceeds to give him directions reſpecting the qualifications which he was to regard in the elders or paſtors, to be ordained by him. "If any be blameleſs,"* &c. From whence ſome have imagined that Titus himſelf was conſtituted by the apoſtle, a biſhop, and the firſt, of Crete, in that ſenſe of the word, in which a biſhop is now diſtinguiſhed from a paſtor, elder or preſbyter. Others, who ſuppoſe that in the new teſtament, there is no ſuch diſtinction of order or office, made betwixt them, which is an undeniable and manifeſt truth; yet ſuppoſe that Titus was actually ordained and fixed by the apoſtle in that office, by whatever name it be called. The firſt of theſe opinions is certainly an ill-grounded one; and the latter, moſt probably, a miſtake alſo. For Titus was, in all probability, a biſhop of Crete, neither in one nor the other of theſe ſenſes; but was what, in ſcripture, is called an "evange-"liſt"; an officer quite diſtinct from a preſbyter, paſtor or biſhop; which were then the ſame.

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* Chap. i. 6.

Do you aſk then, What is meant by an evangeliſt? I will anſwer in the words of a divine, very learned in matters relative to the apoſtolic times, churches and cuſtoms. "The "evangeliſts were a ſort of ſecondary apoſtles, "who received their doctrine and authority im"mediately from the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt: They were not fixed biſhops, or paſ"tors, of particular churches, but watered the "churches which the apoſtles had planted, per"fected what they had left deficient, planted "churches by their orders, or rectified abuſes; "carried and brought back letters and meſſages" [of importance], "and did all they could to ſup"ply the place of an apoſtle, when he was ne"ceſſarily engaged elſewhere*". The account which we have of Titus in the new teſtament, correſponds extremely well with this deſcription of an evangeliſt; and he was, in all probability, an officer of that ſuperior rank, betwixt an apoſtle and a biſhop, or preſbyter. And as the apoſtolic office, in the higheſt and propereſt ſenſe of it, was diſcontinued when the apoſtles perſonally died; ſo, according to the deſcription of an evangeliſt before given, the latter office muſt have alſo been diſcontinued with the other; i. e. in ſuch ſort, that no evangeliſt, in the higheſt and ſtricteſt ſenſe, could be appointed, when there was no apoſtle ſurviving to appoint him. But, this notwithſtanding, there is no reaſon to doubt but that the biſhops, paſtors or preſbyters, who ſurvived the apoſtles, had ſufficient authority, not only to preach themſelves, but to ordain others, for the defence and propagation of the goſpel. And the miniſters of the goſpel at this day, by whatever name or title they are called, have ſtill both theſe powers united in them ; unleſs, perhaps, ſome of them have renounced one of them, by putting themſelves into a ſtate of ſervile dependence upon, and ſubjection to, thoſe who have no right to " lord it over God's heritage",‡ or them. Be that as it may, the church of Chriſt, which is his body,never was, nor will be, ſo forſaken of its head, as not to have within itſelf,as derived from him, ſufficient power, ſufficient authority, for appointing all officers neceſſary for its ſupport; and alſo for " making increaſe of the body, by that which every joint ſupplieth,to the edifying of itſelf in love". §

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* Dr. GEORGE BENSON, the Author's learned friend and correſpondent, lately deceaſed.

The remaining part of the firſt chapter of this epiſtle, is taken up with the proper qualifications for an elder, or chriſtian biſhop; with hints at ſome vain talkers and deceivers, eſpecially thoſe of the circumciſion ; and with remarks on the general character of the Cretians, which was probably much better known to the apoſtle than to Titus ; and yet very needful for the latter, who was to reſide among them for a time, to be well appriſed of.

But, whether Titus were left at Crete as an evangeliſt, or as a preſbyter of prime diſtinction ; or even tho' it were in the capacity of a biſhop in the more modern and unſcriptural ſenſe ; yet it muſt ſtill be remembered, that he was to be a

‡ 1 Pet. v. 3. § Eph. iv. 16.

PREACHING One; not merely to ordain others to that laborious ſervice, and to overſee them therein. For, in the ſecond chapter of the epiſtle, the apoſtle proceeds to give him ſome directions concerning the diſcharge of that duty; and the regard which he was therein to have to perſons of different ages, ſexes, and ſtations in life; admoniſhing him to adapt his inſtructions to them reſpectively. Alluding to the deceivers, and vain talkers, ſpoken of in the former chapter, he begins the ſecond thus: "But ſpeak thou the "things which become ſound doctrine." And, what things thoſe are, we will, if you pleaſe, leave the apoſtle to explain for himſelf; as he does in the following verſes. He immediately ſubjoins; "That the aged men be ſober, "grave, temperate, ſound in faith, in charity, "in patience." Theſe then, are ſome of the things which become ſound doctrine. What are the others? —"The aged women likewiſe, "that they be in behaviour as becometh holineſs; not falſe accuſers*, not given to much wine, "teachers of good things." — Of what good things? — "That they may teach the young "women to be ſober," as the apoſtle goes on; "to love their huſbands, to love their "children, to be diſcrete, chaſte, keepers "at home, good, obedient to their own huſbands, that the "word of God be not blaſ"phemed." But how were the elder women to teach the younger ſuch good things as theſe? Doubtleſs, by their own exemplary practice, and private counſels, as opportunity preſented: For the apoſtle allowed not women, except inſpired, to teach in any other, or more public manner§. Thus it is then, that the elder women were to teach the younger theſe excellent things; amongſt which are good Oeconomy, and a prudent, diſcrete and virtuous behaviour in their families; as for other reaſons, ſo particularly, leſt "the "word of God ſhould be blaſphemed": i. e. leſt the goſpel of Chriſt ſhould fall under the contempt and reproach of men, by reaſon of the ill conduct of women profeſſing godlineſs; whether old or young.

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* In the Original, "not Devils".

THE apoſtle goes on; "Young men likewiſe "exhort to be ſober-minded". And he immediately ſubjoins [ver. 7.] "In all things ſhewing "thyſelf a pattern of good works", &c. Intimating to Titus the great importance, the abſolute neceſſity, of taking heed to himſelf, as well as to his doctrine; and of being an example of that ſobriety, that godly and virtuous converſation, which, by his preaching, he was to recommend to others. The apoſtle then conſiders the ſtate and duty of ſervants; enjoining Titus to teach them "to be obedient unto their own maſters, "and to pleaſe them well, &c. that they might "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all "things". And theſe duties of the old and young, male and female, bond and free, the apoſtle ſuggeſts to Titus, ſhould be inforced upon them reſpectively, by motives drawn from the the nature and deſign of the goſpel of God's grace." "For the grace of God that bringeth "ſalvation unto all men", [ſo it might, and, I think, ought to be rendered] "hath appeared; "teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs, and "worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world; looking "for that bleſſed hope, and the appearing of the "glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus "Chriſt; who gave himſelf for us, that he might "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto "himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good "works. Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man deſpiſe "thee." Thus ends the chapter.

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§ See 1 Cor. xiv. 34. and 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

AND from this curſory view of the chapter, we may form a good general idea of what the apoſtle intended in the beginning of it, by "ſound doctrine", and the "things which become it": viz. more eſpecially the plain, obvious, and indiſputable doctrines of the goſpel, reſpecting the redemption of mankind by the Son of God, and his appearing in glory hereafter to judge the world; together with the practice of ſobriety, righteouſneſs and godlineſs; thoſe duties, the excellency and the obligation of which, are in ſome meaſure apparent from the light of nature, thô more clearly made manifeſt, and more forcibly taught, in the goſpel of the grace of God; in the faith of which they are to be performed. And this account of the things which become ſound doctrine, may receive both illuſtration and confirmation from the ſame apoſtle's firſt epiſtle to Timothy, written on a ſimilar occaſion with this to Titus— "The law is not made for a righteous man", ſays he, "but for the lawleſs and "diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, "for the unholy and prophane, for murderers of "fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-"ſlayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile "themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for "liars, for perjured perſons, and if there be ANY "OTHER THING THAT IS CONTRARY TO "SOUND DOCTRINE, acccording to the glori-"ous goſpel," * &c.

HERE then, you have the Apoſtle's idea, both of the things which become, and which are contrary to, ſound doctrine. But, alas! how different a conception have many perſons, concerning the goſpel, its great deſign, and the things which become ſound doctrine? Are there not multitudes in the countries ſubjected to the papal tyranny, who think that the things which more eſpecially become ſuch doctrine, are, telling beads, going on pilgrimages, croſſing themſelves, kiſſing and worſhipping images; and other ſuch-like fooliſh and abominable practices, many of which are directly contrary to ſound doctrine? And among the proteſtants, the reformed, are there not many, in whoſe yet-depraved, and un-reformed opinion, ſome of the appendages, and the circumſtantials of religion at beſt, have uſurped the higheſt place and eſtimation, as the things that more particularly become ſound doctrine; while the infinitely more important and indiſpenſable duties of morality are deſpiſed, perhaps, as "weak and beggarly

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* 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, 11.

beggarly elements"? Are there not many proteſtants, in whoſe yet-unreformed and depraved judgment, hardly any thing merits the honourable appellation of ſound doctrine, beſides the ſubtleties and refinements of ſpeculative men, reſpecting certain abſtruſe, and, at beſt, very doubtful points?— Such as, One may ſafely ſay, very few people can even underſtand, and fewer ſtill were, probably, ever the better for; tho' it is likely very many have been the worſe: If not the worſe, merely by believing them, yet by getting their minds ſoured about them, and embittered againſt their chriſtian brethren, who were ſo unhappy, or, perhaps more properly, ſo happy, as not to ſee with *their* eyes. For my own part, I cannot but think it much more ſafe to form my conceptions of ſound doctrine, and the things which become it, by this apoſtolical account thereof, than by the writings of any uninſpired, ſelf-conceited and arrogant men whatſoever: Eſpecially men, who were hardly ever eaſy, but when they were either coining ſome new, unſcriptural definitions and diſtinctions, in the ungolden mint of their own brain, or imperiouſly impoſing this droſſy, counterfeit coin upon their neighbours; hereticating and perſecuting, curſing and murdering all, who would not receive it as true and genuine, unleſs when *ſomething elſe* proved a more efficacious reſtraint with them, than either the fear of God, or the love of man: endeavouring to engage heaven and earth, and, with more ſucceſs, probably, to move hell in their quarrel;

rel*; aſſerting that their ſpiritual coin, for which, good men! they deſired only worldly honors, and periſhing gold in exchange, was the true riches, and evidently bore an heavenly, divine impreſſion: While thoſe to whom they would put it off, purely for their eternal benefit, could, alas poor blinded men! diſcern upon it no image or ſuperſcription more ſacred and venerable, than the mere terreſtrial one of the mortal coiners; the image of the earthly, not of the heavenly ADAM.—O deteſtable hypocriſy and villany!—Such in fact were both the ſpirit and the practice of many of thoſe men, who are now followed by multitudes of proteſtants, as the greateſt luminaries of the chriſtian church ſince the apoſtles days, and the preachers of "ſound doctrine", by way of diſtinction from others, at leaſt as learned, and of a far more peaceable, pious and virtuous converſation; which is, indeed, paying theſe reputed *unſound* men, but a very indifferent compliment.

BUT, to return to the apoſtle and his epiſtle, from thoſe who were ſo unlike him both in doctrine and manners:—His epiſtle having been written with a view to direct Titus in his behaviour as a miniſter of the goſpel; and particularly, though not primarily, reſpecting that material branch of his duty as ſuch, his doctrine, or preaching; the particular directions relative hereto, are doubtleſs obligatory upon the preachers of the goſpel in ſucceeding ages; as is, at leaſt generally, allowed. And, by the way, however ſuperior Titus may be ſuppoſed to have been in ſome reſpects, to any or all of the miniſters of the goſpel at this day; yet the directions given him by the apoſtle, are given with ſuch an air, in ſuch a manner, as ſuppoſes him to have been only on a level with them in another, *viz.* as an uninſpired man, who was to receive the doctrine which he preached, and the rules to be obſerved by him, immediately from the apoſtle, not from the Spirit of God, who ſpake in and by him. I think myſelf, therefore, (one of the leaſt conſiderable, indeed, of thoſe who have the honor to ſuſtain this ſacred office) obliged to preach ſound doctrine, and the things which become it, according to this account and repreſentation thereof, in all its branches: But ſhall now confine myſelf to that ſingle point, to which my text relates; the " exhorting young men to be ſober-minded".

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* Flectere ſi nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo. Æn. vii.

It has been the remark of many perſons, and, I ſuppoſe, not wholly without foundation, that, amongſt my honoured and beloved hearers of this ſociety, there is a pretty large proportion of " young men" ; a larger proportion, perhaps, than in moſt of the other aſſemblies in the town. I can truly ſay, I am, as it is certainly my duty to be, tenderly concerned for their intereſt, reputation and honour; for their real good in this world, as well as their eternal happineſs in the other. And, tho' I have not been unmindful of them in times paſt; yet, methinks, it will be no more than a proper piece of reſpect, and mark of my unfeigned love and regard to them, if I adapt and devote a number of diſcourſes more particularly to their ſervice, agreeably to the apoſtolic injunction in the text. This is what is propoſed; and may almighty God, by his bleſſing, render theſe diſcourſes as truly uſeful and ſalutary to them, as they are ſincerely deſigned for that end!

AFTER ſome remarks on the principal terms in the text, the method which, by divine permiſſion and aſſiſtance, will be purſued, is as follows. It is intended,

FIRST, Somewhat diſtinctly to explain to my young brethren, the nature of that ſobriety which is ſpoken of in the text; and to recommend it in a curſory way.

SECONDLY, To point out, particularly, ſome of the many ſins, follies and criminal exceſſes, which are repugnant to it; and againſt which young men eſpecially, may need to be cautioned.

THIRDLY, It is propoſed, more largely and diſtinctly, to exhort them to this ſobriety of mind, and to diſſwade them from the contrary. And,

FOURTHLY, To ſhew them the extreme folly and danger of delaying to be ſober-minded, till they are farther advanced in years; the common, and often fatal error of the young.

LET me make ſome remarks on the principal terms of the text, before I proceed to the main deſign, as repreſented above. And,

1. THE perſons who are to be thus exhorted, are " young men." It may not be amiſs juſt to obſerve here,that what is tranſlated young men,in two words,is only one in the original: the "young", or " younger", in the plural number,with a maſculine termination to denote the ſex intended; there being nothing beſides this termination, to warrant the addition of the word " men," as in our common tranſlation: with which, however, I would not be thought to find any fault on this account. For the original word is in general well enough rendered thus. Under this term, or theſe terms, [young men] may be comprehended all perſons of that ſex, between children, and thoſe whom we commonly call middle-aged perſons.

HUMAN life, or the age of man, has been variouſly divided. One, and, I believe, a pretty ancient method of dividing it, is into four periods; *viz.* childhood and youth, complete, perfect manhood, and old age. Thoſe who divide it thus,reckon the ſtate of childhood,from the birth to fourteen years; of youth, from fourteen to about twenty five; of complete, perfect manhood, from twenty five to fifty; and of old age, from thence-forward till death; whether that come at the end of three-ſcore years and ten, or, by reaſon of ſtrength, not 'till fourſcore years; or tho' people ſhould live ſtill longer " in labor and ſorrow.‡"

ACCORDING to this diviſion of human life, you perceive that all betwixt fourteen and twenty five years, are to be reckoned in the claſs of young men. And as to thoſe who either a little fall ſhort of, or exceed theſe years; they may yet well enough be comprehended in the text, under the denomination of young men. Neither the holy ſcriptures, nor moral diſcourſes in general, aim at preciſion in ſuch matters as theſe. It would, indeed, be no better than trifling to inſiſt, in diſcourſes of this kind, upon the punctilio of a few weeks, months, or even years.

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‡ Pſalm xc. 10.

It may be farther remarked here, that when, in common diſcourſe, we ſpeak of young men, we often mean thoſe that are in a ſingle ſtate, or the unmarried, in contradiſtinction from the married, tho' SOME of the former are OLDER than many of the latter. But the apoſtle does not appear to ſpeak of young men in this reſtrained ſenſe, excluſively of the married; but rather to include both; tho' he might probably have a more particular view to the former. That he does not ſpeak of the unmarried by way of diſtinction from the married, is at leaſt probable from what he had juſt before ſaid concerning the young women, as he calls them; [ver. 4.] ſome of whom he, nevertheleſs, ſuppoſes to be married, to have huſbands, and children: "That they may "teach the young women to—love their huſbands, "to love their children, &c." From hence it may be naturally inferred, that the apoſtle, in the next verſe but one, ſpeaking of young men, did not intend to be underſtood of the unmarried only: Eſpecially if it be conſidered that ſome of theſe, who have never entered into that ſtate of life, which he ſays "is honorable in all," inſtead of being young, are indeed OLD: At leaſt this is the caſe among US at this day—However, as was intimated before, the apoſtle may naturally be ſuppoſed to have had the unmarried more eſpecially in his eye; as being, perhaps, at once the greater number, and ſtanding in ſome peculiar need of ſuch an exhortation to ſobriety——

IT is accordingly deſigned to accommodate my diſcourſes upon this ſubject, more particularly to thoſe whom we commonly mean by young men, or the unmarried. But this, it is hoped, will not prevent others, the married, and even the aged of both ſexes, from reaping ſome benefit from them. For, as ſobriety, virtue, or true religion, is one uniform thing, in which all perſons, of whatever age, ſex, or condition, are concerned; ſo whatever is ſaid upon this univerſally-intereſting ſubject, if ſaid with tolerable propriety, may be in ſome meaſure for the edification of all in general, tho' it be moſt particularly adapted and directed to "young men." But,

2. IT will be proper to give you here, a brief explanation of the term "ſober-minded"; and, hereby, ſome general idea what that is, to which the apoſtle would have young men exhorted.

THE original word and its derivatives are uſed, ſometimes in a more narrow or reſtrained, and ſometimes in a more extenſive, comprehenſive ſenſe. When uſed in the former, they may ſignify, and are tranſlated, grave, chaſte, temperate; in oppoſition to lightneſs, leudneſs, and an immoderate indulgence of the ſenſual appetites. They are uſed in ſuch a reſtrained ſenſe, even in ſeveral places of this ſame chapter; of which it is unneceſſary to give particular inſtances. And in the like reſtrained ſenſe the Engliſh word "ſober," is often uſed.

But the original may well bear a much more comprehenſive meaning. It may ſignify, to be of a "ſound mind" in general; to have an enlightened, a well-informed and healthy mind; a mind rightly diſpoſed; a proper temper, a duly regulated will and affections, accompanied by a correſponding external behaviour: In oppoſition to an erroneous, ignorant mind; a blind and depraved, a carnal or fleſhly mind; a mind ſet upon folly and vanity; a diſorderly, unruly will and affections; and thoſe evil practices, which are the natural fruit and conſequence of having a mind thus darkned and corrupted. The original word will very eaſily and naturally bear ſuch an extenſive ſignification as this. [†] And there is the more reaſon for underſtanding it thus in the text, becauſe the apoſtle, directing Titus as to his miniſterial application to young men, ſums all up in this ſingle word, that he ſhould exhort them to be "ſober-minded:" Whereas he branches out into ſeveral particulars, in what he ſays with reference to aged men, aged women, and young women, in the preceeding context; and to ſervants, in the verſes following. From hence it appears pretty evident, that this ſingle word was deſigned to comprehend a great deal in it; in ſhort, every thing, in effect, to which young

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[†] SOPHRONEIN, ſobrius eſſe, ſapere, vel ſanâ mente eſſe præditus. SOPHRONISMOS, ſanitas animi, ſapientia. Vid, 2 Tim .I. 7.---" a ſound mind."

men need to be exhorted. I therefore underſtand it much in the ſame latitude and extent, that Solomon commonly uſes the word wiſdom, in his writings, viz. as comprehending true religion in general, both in principle and practice; allowing only for the difference of times and circumſtances, or of the diſpenſations which Solomon and we are under:—He under the Moſaic, and we, the Chriſtian.

3. THE next thing, and all that is farther neceſſary to be conſidered, for the explanation of the text, is the manner of addreſs which the apoſtle enjoins Titus to uſe, expreſſed by the word "exhortation."—Young men likewiſe "exhort," &c. And, what this implies and ſuppoſes in it, may appear from the following obſervations.

(1.) EXHORTATION differs widely, in the nature and idea of it, from *commanding*, imperiouſly injoining a thing upon another, or authoritatively requiring it, as a maſter may command, injoin, or require any thing of, his ſervants. The miniſters of the goſpel have no ſuch authority as this over old or young. Even the inſpired apoſtles claimed no ſuch power; declaring that they had no dominion over the faith of others: And they particularly admoniſh other miniſters, not to behave themſelves as "lords over God's heritage."

(2.) MINISTERIAL exhortation differs, on the other hand, from merely *requeſting* ſomething of another, or expreſſing a ſimple *deſire* of it. One perſon may, in numberleſs inſtances, expreſs a deſire that another would do this or that, and yet not exhort him to it. For example, if a poor man ſhould make known his wants to his neighbour, and aſk an alms of him, no one would call this "exhorting" him to be charitable, or merciful.

(3.) CHRISTIAN and miniſterial exhortation implies in it, reaſoning, urging, and endeavouring to perſwade, by the uſe of ſuch arguments as are adapted to touch the conſcience, to move the will, and to excite people to the performance of what is conſidered as their duty, or that which they ought to do; preſſing it upon them with earneſtneſs, and a proper pathos, as being of great importance. So that the manner of addreſs expreſſed by the word exhortation, is a medium betwixt commanding and ſimply deſiring a thing; the former of which ſuppoſeth ſuch an authority as no miniſter of the goſpel has, and the latter of which implies nothing more than what a child might do as well as an apoſtle.

(4.) THE uſe of exhortation, as now explained, ſuppoſes men, even the young, to be reaſonable creatures; capable of underſtanding what is ſaid to them; of ſeeing the force, and feeling the weight, of rational arguments; and ſo, of being influenced by them. No man, in the due exerciſe of his own reaſon, employs it in giving exhortations to irrational creatures; to ſuch as are, in their own nature, incapable of being wrought upon, or moved by ſuch means; on a ſtock or a ſtone, on the horſe or mule, which have no underſtanding. The end of exhortation is to move, to incline the will, by offering proper, intelligible motives and arguments to the underſtanding, or conſcience; as was ſaid before.

(5.) EXHORTING young men or others, to be ſober-minded, ſuppoſes that they need it, by reaſon of ſome natural or adventitious averſion, or diſinclination thereto: At leaſt it ſuppoſes, that they need further information; and to have motives, or arguments ſet before them in a ſtronger light; ſo as to touch their hearts, and give a proper turn to their will and affections. For there would be no room, at leaſt no occaſion, for exhortation, if their minds were ſuppoſed to be already properly informed, and their wills, hearts, and affections under due regulation; ſuch as they ought to be under.

(6.) SUCH exhortation does not, however, ſuppoſe that the great end or deſign of it is to be anſwered, merely by its own power, force, or energy, independently of the bleſſing and grace of God concurring. What it really ſuppoſes, as was ſaid before, is, a reaſonable creature, or a proper ſubject, a free, moral agent, one naturally capable of underſtanding, and being influenced by rational motives; and, at the ſame time, one that needs inſtruction and excitement, in reſpect of ſome natural or adventitious darkneſs of mind, or irregularity of the will and affections. But, whether the beſt-adapted exhortations that man can give, ſhall be effectual in the event, to anſwer the propoſed end, depends upon God. For it is not without his gracious influence, that theſe arguments will actually ſo touch the heart, as to produce their deſigned effect; however rational or ſcriptural they may be. There is really no true ſobriety, no good fruit, no increaſe, no ſpiritual harveſt, beſides that which God giveth, even tho' a Paul planteth, and an Apollos watereth: As, indeed, there is not any fruit, any harveſt produced even in the natural world, without his ſecret energy and bleſſing, however diligent or ſkilful the huſbandman may be.

(7.) CHRISTIAN and miniſterial exhortation implies in it, a kind, friendly and courteous manner of addreſs, in oppoſition to a rough, haughty and imperious one. The apoſtle well knew, that it was by gentle and paternal treatment, rather than by harſhneſs, rigor and ſeverity, that young men are, by the bleſſing of God, to be made ſober-minded, virtuous and good. He therefore directs Titus to "exhort" them to be ſo. The ſame apoſtle in his firſt epiſtle to Timothy, written with the like general deſign with this to Titus, particularly enjoins upon him a reſpectful, courteous and obliging manner of treating all, both the old and young of both ſexes. "Rebuke not an elder," ſays he, (by an elder, here, doubtleſs meaning an old man only, not a paſtor or biſhop) "but entreat "him as a father; and the younger men as "BRETHREN; the elder women as mothers, "the younger as ſiſters, with all purity." And in his ſecond epiſtle to the ſame perſon, he gives him the following caution againſt a rough and arrogant behavior in his miniſterial capacity. "The "ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive," ſays he, "but be gentle unto ALL men, apt to teach, pa-

" tient, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe " themſelves; if God peradventure will give them " repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." The ſame great apoſtle appeals to the Theſſalonians as witneſſes of the kind and paternal manner in which he conducted himſelf towards them, when he preached the goſpel among them: " Ye " know," ſays he, " how we *exhorted*, and *com-* " *forted*, and *charged* every one one of you, AS " A FATHER DOTH HIS CHILDREN, that ye " would walk worthy of God, who hath called " you unto his kingdom and glory."‡

THESE paſſages may help to informs us, what ſort or manner of addreſs the apoſtle intended, by the word " exhortation;"—how great a regard he had for decorum, meekneſs and decency, in the miniſters of the goſpel; and how tenderly, kindly and courteouſly he would have even " young men" treated by them. If theſe rules have not been duly obſerved by all miniſters ſince; if ill-natur'd reproaches, revilings, angry invectives and harſh, imperious menaces, have been ſometimes heard, inſtead of the kind voice of exhortation and gentle perſwaſion, in the ſpirit of meekneſs and charity; it is not becauſe the miniſters of the goſpel are not ſufficiently warned againſt ſuch a proſtitution of their ſacred office and character, in the holy ſcriptures. Beſides: religion is a reaſonable ſervice. It requires in the very nature of it, an enlightened mind, a convinced judgment, the conſent, approbation and love of the heart; as being in itſelf moſt amiable, the foundation of all true happineſs here and hereafter. And, ſurely, this conviction of its excellency, this complacency in, and love to it, are not to be produced, either in the old or young, by reproaches, invectives, or an imperious addreſs, in the teachers of religion. In this reſpect, very particularly, the apoſtolic maxim will ever hold true; that "the wrath of man worketh "not the righteouſneſs of God." And theſe rules of charity and decorum, my beloved young brethren, ſhall ſtand as a perpetual reproach to my ſelf, if I deviate from them, by railing at, reviling, or lording it over you, inſtead of "exhorting you to be ſober-minded." But,

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‡ 1 Epiſ. Chap. II.

(8.) It would be a wrong inference from what has been ſaid reſpecting this point, that theſe miniſterial exhortations may therefore be innocently diſregarded: Or, that thoſe to whom they are given, are at liberty either to receive or reject them, without any danger of incurring the diſpleaſure of God. Exhortations that are founded in truth and reaſon, and are according to the word and will of God, by whomſoever given, cannot be deſpiſed, or ſet at nought, without guilt and peril. The miniſters of the goſpel are indiſpenſably obliged to take heed, what they deliver as his word and will; what they exhort you to; not "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And if they do the latter, either knowingly and wilfully, or thro' a criminal neglect to inform themſelves what they ought to preach, great is their guilt, and great the condemnation which belongs to them. Neither, on this ſuppoſition, are you obliged to believe them, or to regard their exhortations; nay, you are bound in reaſon, duty and conſcience to reject them. But, on the other hand, if they deliver to you real and important truth; if they exhort you to what is according to the word and will of God; certainly ſuch exhortations as theſe are, in their own nature, binding. I mean, they are obligatory upon your conſciences: You cannot diſregard them, without acting contrary to reaſon, without ſinning againſt God, and expoſing yourſelves, hereby, to his righteous diſpleaſure. What tho' the miniſters of the goſpel are not your maſters, or lords? What tho' they have no authority to command you how you ſhall conduct yourſelves? What tho' they have no right to call you to an account, for contemning and diſregarding their exhortations? or to harm you in any reſpect whatſoever, as certainly they have not. Yet are you not accountable to God? Are you not accountable to yourſelves? Are you at liberty to act unreaſonably? Have you a right to reject the truth? the commandments of God? Are you without law to him? Have you, in ſhort, a right to reject any exhortations that are given you agreeable to his word and will, by thoſe who, in his providence, ſuſtain the character and relation of teachers and inſtructors to you? or even by any other perſon? You cannot think you have any ſuch right as this, to do wrong; or that you may "uſe liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs."

In many caſes, counſels and exhortations are refuſeable; or they may be rejected without guilt or danger. But this is only when they are in their nature bad, or indifferent, doubtful, or merely prudential. No exhortations of this nature, are binding upon the conſcience; but the perſons to whom they are given, are at liberty to reject them, if they chuſe to do ſo; yea, they are in reaſon and conſcience bound to do it, as to thoſe counſels that are poſitively bad; as was obſerved before. But when you are exhorted to be ſober-minded; when you are counſelled to receive and embrace the truth, ſufficiently proved to be ſuch; when you are perſwaded to do what is in its nature fit and reaſonable to be done; when you are admoniſhed to fear God, and keep his commandments; in a word, when you are exhorted to do your duty, and what God himſelf requires of you; certainly theſe are counſels and exhortations of ſuch a kind, that they cannot be diſregarded without great guilt and danger. They do not come under the head of indifferent, doubtful, or merely prudential counſels; much leſs, under that of bad ones: But they are ſuch as ought to have all the weight and influence of commands; even the commands of God himſelf. Such, indeed, they are, in one ſenſe: For God authoritatively requires of you, whatſoever you are exhorted to, conformably to reaſon, his word and will, whoever the exhorters themſelves may be; and altho' they have no dominion over you, nor any right to exact an account of your behaviour, except in the way of ſober remonſtrance, expoſtulation, and friendly reproof, if there ſhould be occaſion for it.

If the young men of Crete had not "ſuffered the word of exhortation" from Titus, but ſcorned and rejected it; would they not have been juſtly blameable? Without doubt. If you ſhould do the like, what would be the conſequence? You need not be told? The obligation to regard and follow exhortations, depends much leſs upon the character, office, or qualifications of him that gives them, than it does upon the nature of the exhortations themſelves. Tho', as to the former, there is no evidence, nor even probability, that Titus was an inſpired preacher. He received his doctrine and directions from the apoſtle. If others therefore, tho' the meaneſt of Chriſt's miniſters, follow the doctrine and directions of the ſame apoſtle, of all the apoſtles, and even of Chriſt himſelf; will not their exhortations be as binding upon you, as thoſe of Titus were upon the Cretian youth?—"Judge even of yourſelves "what is right."

(9.) Altho' the term exhortation implies in it a friendly and courteous manner of addreſs; yet, certainly, it is not deſigned in oppoſition to *reproving* and *rebuking* thoſe that do evil, when there is juſt occaſion for it. For, in the ſame chapter, the apoſtle enjoins Titus to do thus: "Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and *rebuke* with "all authority; let no man deſpiſe thee." Where you will obſerve, that exhorting and rebuking are joined together; ſo that the former could not be intended in the text, in oppoſition to the latter. And in the preceeding chapter, ſpeaking of the groſs immoralities of the Cretians, as even one of their own poets had characterized them, he immediately ſubjoins, "This witneſs is true; wherefore *rebuke them ſharply*, &c." † In his epiſtle to Timothy, he alſo ſays, "Them that ſin, "rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear."§ Or, as it might, and, I ſuppoſe, ought to be tranſlated: "Them that ſin before all, rebuke," &c. For, ſurely, they were not to be rebuked before all, or in a public, ſolemn manner, unleſs they had ſinned before all, or their crimes were notorious and public; as the common reading implies.

BUT it is farther to be obſerved here, that even reproof and rebuke, which are needful in ſome caſes, and which may ſeem to imply ſomewhat of rigor and ſeverity in their nature; may yet be adminiſtred in a truly friendly and paternal manner. And they doubtleſs ought to be given in ſuch a way, if poſſible, as to convince thoſe to whom they are given, that they are kindly intended for their amendment, and real good; ſince, otherwiſe, there is little or no benefit to be hoped from them. Yea, they are more likely to have a bad, than a good effect, if they are ſeen to proceed from pride, reſentment and anger, or are attended with inſulting and reviling expreſſions. And, that the apoſtle did not deſign ſuch rebukes as theſe, but quite contrary ones, in the ſpirit of charity and meekneſs, is ſufficiently evident from his own words, in his ſecond epiſtle to Timothy; where he joins reproving, rebuking and exhorting, together; ſaying, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort "*with all long-ſuffering and doctrine*;" and this, even where he is ſpeaking profeſſedly of thoſe, who "would not endure ſound doctrine." ‡

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† Chap. I. 12, 13. § 1 Tim. V. 20. ‡ Chap. IV. 2, 3.

(10.) AND laſtly, It cannot reaſonably be thought inconſiſtent with the kindneſs, meekneſs and gentleneſs of the goſpel, or of that manner of addreſs which is implied in the word exhortation, to lay open the folly and danger of vice, or of diſregarding the word and commandments of God, in the plaineſt, fulleſt and moſt forceable manner poſſible: To ſhew to all people, whether old or young, the guilt and miſery of a ſtate of alienation from God, and of enmity to him in their minds by wicked works; together with the imminent hazzard which wicked men are in, of periſhing in their ſins; and "warning them to flee from the wrath to come." It is not here meant, that this may be done by prejudging, or pointing out particular perſons, as the heirs of wrath and perdition; which were indeed an abominable piece of arrogance and preſumption; but, by ſhewing in a clear and forceable manner, that the paths of vice and folly, by whomſoever trodden, are the paths that lead to deſtruction.

THERE are ſome perſons, who profeſs to have a reliſh for diſcourſes upon the excellency and rewards of moral virtue, with exhortations to the practice of it; and yet do not well like to have the evil and danger of ſin inſiſted on; or the terrors of the Lord ſet before them. This is what ſome people conſider as ſavouring of harſhneſs, ſourneſs and ſeverity; hardly conſiſtent with the meekneſs and charity which become the miniſters of the goſpel. Nor, indeed, will I deny, that theſe topics may be treated upon, not only in a manner that is very juſtly diſguſtful, but too frequently;

quently; or to the neglect of others which are equally proper and uſeful; and are, at the ſame time, more pleaſing; yea, probably, better adapted to produce a good effect upon the minds of many perſons. And, to ſay the leaſt, I do not envy thoſe men their particular temper, and caſt of mind, who ſeem to be hardly ever ſo much in their element, as when they are thundering "hell and damnation" in the ears of people, with all the moſt frightful images and expreſſions, which they can collect together.

BUT ſtill, theſe leſs agreeable topics of perſwaſion, are in themſelves very proper and neceſſary: And the inſiſting on them at times, in a ſcriptural way, ought not to be imputed to ſourneſs, gloomineſs or moroſeneſs of temper; or to any want of charity and good-will. Is the phyſician thought to be wanting in kindneſs, good-will or reſpect to his patient, for letting him know, in ſome caſes, the nature and danger of his diſeaſe? Eſpecially if, at the ſame time, he informs him of the remedy; exhorts him to uſe it, and to take all poſſible care and pains, that he may recover his health, and live happily. The diſeaſe would be the ſame in itſelf, tho' the patient were not thus informed concerning it; and the real danger, very often the greater, for a reaſon too obvious to need mentioning. Is the pilot who, at a diſtance, obſerves a veſſel in a ſtorm, juſt running upon rocks or quickſands, and likely to be foundered in a few minutes, thought to want good-will to the people on board, becauſe he gives them the ſignal of their danger, and directs them to a ſecure harbour! Is the watchman that cries "Fire" aloud in the night, thro' the ſtreets of a city, to awake the ſleeping inhabitants, leſt they ſhould be conſumed in their beds; calling upon them to ariſe, and extinguiſh the flames, ſuppoſed for that reaſon, to want benevolence to them, and a proper concern for their welfare! No one is ſo abſurd as to reaſon after this rate. In theſe caſes, neither the phyſician, the pilot, nor the watchman *makes* the danger; but only *diſcovers* it, and *exhorts* thoſe whom it concerns, to eſcape it: Which, ſurely, are acts of kindneſs and charity; and ſuch as each of them was under obligation to perform. To have done otherwiſe, would have been at once a neglect of duty, and great cruelty.

WHY then ſhould it be thought unkind, or ungenerous, in the ſpiritual phyſician under Chriſt the Chief, to ſhew to youth, or others, their ſpiritual diſeaſes? their danger of eternal death? Eſpecially if, at the ſame time, he ſhews the remedy, the means of obtaining eternal life, and exhorts to the uſe thereof. Why ſhould it be thought an unkindneſs for the ſpiritual pilot, to warn thoſe of their danger, whom he ſees carried down the gulph of error and vice with a rapid courſe; and ready to be ſwallowed up in the abyſs of deſtruction and miſery? Eſpecially if, at the ſame time, he points them to the great ARK, and to a ſecure haven; where neither winds, nor waves, nor ſtorms can hurt them. Why ſhould it be accounted a cruel thing in the ſpiritual watchman, to awaken thoſe that are aſleep in their ſins, and every moment in danger of being conſumed in the fire of God's indignation?—to "cry aloud," and even to "lift "up his voice like a trumpet"; exhorting them, if I may ſo expreſs it, to extinguiſh thoſe terrible flames with the tears of repentance, while there is opportunity for it? Is not this the trueſt charity? As was ſaid in the other caſes, he does not *make*, but only *give warning* of the danger, that it may be eſcaped. And has not God enjoined this upon all who are, by office, the preachers of righteouſneſs? He ſays to each of them, in effect, as he did to the prophet of old: "Son "of man, I have made thee a watchman to the "houſe of Iſrael: Therefore hear the word at "MY MOUTH; and give them warning from "ME. When I ſay unto the wicked, Thou "ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not "warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from "his wicked way to ſave his life; the ſame "wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity; but his "blood will I require AT THY HAND. Yet "if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not "from his wickedneſs, nor from his wicked "way, he ſhall die in his iniquity; but thou "haſt delivered THY SOUL." †

IT ſhould alſo be remembered, that exhorting young men, or others, to be ſober-minded, muſt, by natural and juſt implication intend, uſing all arguments and motives that are proper to that end. And therefore, ſuch as the laſt-mentioned, muſt not, cannot be omitted; tho' there

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† Ezek. Ch. III.

there are many others to be inſiſted on, with the ſame general view. Indeed, a miniſter of the goſpel ſhews no leſs benevolence and tenderneſs to his hearers, by admoniſhing them of the danger of infidelity and impenitence, provided it is done in a rational and ſcriptural way; than by exhorting them to be ſober-minded, wiſe and virtuous, from a conſideration of the preſent peace, and future rewards of religion: Such conſiderations as thoſe which now cloſe this diſcourſe, addreſſed by Solomon to his own Son; and found among thoſe excellent proverbs, the deſign of which was, "to give ſubtlety to the "ſimple, to the *young man* knowledge and un-"derſtanding".— "My ſon—Happy is the man "that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth "underſtanding. For the merchandiſe of it is "better than the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the "gain thereof than fine gold. She is more "precious than rubies: and all the things thou "canſt deſire, are not to be compared unto her. "Length of days is in her right hand: and in "her left hand riches and honour. Her ways "are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are "peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay "hold upon her; and happy is every one that "retaineth her." †

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† Prov. III. 11——18.

SERMON

SERMON II.

Of Sobriety in general, in Principle and Practice. More particularly, That it implies (1) A Belief of God's Being, Perfections and Providence. (2) Of the Chriſtian Revelation. And (3) Sober Thoughts of One's ſelf. Short Reflections on each.

TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

MY beloved young brethren of this Society, having a deſign to adapt a number of diſcourſes particularly to your ſervice, as a mark of the reſpect and good-will which I bear to you, as well as from a regard to my duty more immediately to God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve with my ſpirit, tho' in weakneſs : I thought I might very properly make theſe words of the apoſtle Paul to Titus, the ſubject of my intended diſcourſes.

In the morning I made ſome remarks on Titus and the Epiſtle to him; on the terms "young men", and "ſober-minded"; and then conſidered, more particularly, what that manner of addreſs implies in it, which is expreſſed in the text by the word "exhortation". Theſe ſeveral obſervations were deſigned only as introductory to my main deſign; which was exhibited in the preceeding diſcourſe, under four general heads. The firſt of theſe, to which I ſhall now proceed without farther preface, was,

FIRST, By divine aſſiſtance, ſomewhat diſtinctly to explain to you the nature of that ſobriety, which is ſpoken of in the text; and to recommend it to you in a curſory way.

But, let me here juſt remind you of ſomething obſerved in the preceeding diſcourſe; that the original Greek word, tho' perhaps moſt commonly uſed in a reſtrained ſenſe, to ſignify being grave, chaſte, temperate or moderate, yet eaſily and naturally admits a very extenſive meaning. It may comprehend all that is commonly intended in the writings of Solomon, by "wiſdom"; i. e. true religion in general, both in principle and practice. And there is, if I miſtake not, a particular poſitive reaſon for underſtanding it in ſuch a latitude in the text. In this comprehenſive ſenſe, it will accordingly be conſidered in the enſuing diſcourſes.

For the farther illuſtration hereof, it may be obſerved that this expreſſion, "ſober-minded," naturally ſuggeſts to us, that true ſobriety, or all true wiſdom, begins, and has its ſeat in the mind, ſoul or ſpirit; the intellectual, immortal, and moſt excellent part of our compound nature: That it conſiſts in the ſoul's, or mind's being rightly informed, diſpoſed, and under due regulation. If the mind be not duly enlightened, rightly affected, and under a proper influence, no perſon, whether old or young, can be truly wiſe, virtuous or ſober. Not the body, but the mind itſelf, is moſt properly the reſidence, or ſeat, of true wiſdom and ſobriety; of all morally good qualities. However inoffenſive, blameleſs or regular a perſon's external behaviour in life may be; yet if you ſuppoſe him at the ſame time to have a mind deſtitute of knowledge, uninformed with truth, void of ſincerity and good principle; or, in one word, if you ſuppoſe him deſtitute of a "ſober mind," in the ſtrict, literal ſenſe of theſe words, you certainly ſuppoſe him to be neither wiſe nor good, in a moral ſenſe. You ſuppoſe, indeed, ſome appearance of wiſdom, of ſobriety, or of virtue; but it is only the appearance, not the reality; the ſhadow without the ſubſtance. Or, if I may be indulged the expreſſion, you ſuppoſe a fair, magnificent temple, but no Deity, no God within. Nay, farther: If you ſuppoſe the ſoul, or mind of man, unadorned with knowledge, virtue, and good principle; do you not, of conſequence, ſuppoſe it to be deformed and debaſed by error, ignorance, vice, or poſitively bad principles? Doubtleſs you do. The mind of an infant has, indeed, been conſidered by ſome, as a *charte blanche*, or clean paper, fit to receive any inſcription, impreſſion or character; and tho' not endowed with any knowledge or virtue, ſtill not poſitively erroneous, vitiated, or morally corrupted: With the truth and juſtneſs of which ſuppoſition, I am not now concerned. But you cannot even ſuppoſe a perſon that is come to years, ſo as to be a moral agent, in ſuch a middle ſtate as this, betwixt knowledge and error, good and evil diſpoſitions. If ſuch a perſon, tho' but a young man, is deſtitute of wiſdom, virtue, and a right turn of mind, he is certainly and poſitively erroneous, fooliſh, vicious, or wrongly diſpoſed. Whatever may be imagined reſpecting the ſoul of an infant; yet the ſoul of ſuch a moral agent, cannot be conceived deſtitute of all thought and ſentiment, of all opinion and principles; and if it is not under the influence of ſuch as are true and right, virtuous and good; it muſt of courſe be defiled, corrupted and depraved by ſuch as are erroneous and vicious; as was ſaid before. So that tho' I juſt now compared a perſon, who is apparently ſober or virtuous, but without ſincerity, without good principle, to a beautiful temple in which no Deity reſides; it now ſeems that ſuch a one may, with far more propriety, be likened to a "whited "ſepulchre, which indeed appears beautiful out-"ward, but is within full of dead mens bones, "and of all uncleanneſs". †

Now, if the very "mind and conſcience are thus defiled", thus under the influence of error, of wrong diſpoſitions and affections; ſurely you cannot think ſuch a perſon "ſober-mined", whatever his external appearance may be. Let me juſt add here, that tho', in many characters, there is ſuch a ſtrange mixture of wiſdom and folly, virtue and vice, ſincerity and hypocriſy, that it is next to impoſſible for any mortal to determine, whether the good or the bad qualities predominate, ſo as to conſtitute the general character; yet doubtleſs, either the former or the latter actually do ſo in every man. For otherwiſe, there would be a moral agent without any moral character! — unleſs this can be juſtly accounted one — That he is neither wiſe nor fooliſh, virtuous nor vicious, good nor bad, but ſomething, no one can tell what, between both: Which, to be ſure, will not be eaſily admitted even as a ſuppoſeable caſe or fact, by thoſe that have given their attention to the important ſubject of morals and religion.

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† Mat. 23. 37.

But tho' it is ſuggeſted by the very expreſſion in the text, that the mind itſelf is the ſeat of virtue, wiſdom or ſobriety, as was ſaid before; yet you are not to imagine that when you are exhorted to be ſober-minded, this exhortation reſpects your minds, or inner man only; or, that it has no reference to your outward behaviour. There is an external ſobriety of the manners, as well as an internal one of the mind; tho' the latter is, indeed, the firſt to be conſidered and regarded. But the mind being ſet right, or duly informed and diſpoſed; your outward actions and converſation are alſo to be under a proper regulation; ſuch as correſponds to a ſober mind. Yea, farther, if your minds are endowed with true wiſdom or ſobriety, your outward conduct will, without doubt, be ſober and regular alſo. Theſe things cannot well be ſeparated even in imagination. The former of them infers the latter; though the latter of them does not, at leaſt not ſo neceſſarily, infer the former. For we may much more eaſily conceive of a perſon's having the external appearance of virtue and ſobriety in his behaviour, without the reality of it in his mind, than we can, on the other hand, conceive of his being really wiſe, or ſober-minded, and yet commonly acting fooliſhly and viciouſly. The former is not an impoſſibility; but the latter is ſo, even in nature. There being, therefore, ſuch a cloſe and manifeſt connection betwixt ſobriety of mind, and of converſation, both which are neceſſary to conſtitute a truly good character; the exhortation which we are conſidering, muſt be ſuppoſed to reſpect and comprehend both; the former of them, indeed, primarily, and moſt directly, and the latter of them indirectly, or conſequentially; but yet no leſs truly and certainly than it does the other, the ſobriety of the mind.

It ſhould be further obſerved, that there are not, properly ſpeaking, two or more different kinds of true ſobriety, wiſdom or religion; one for the old, another for the middle-aged, and a third for the young; or one for male, and another for female: But there is one kind of religion, wiſdom or ſobriety for all; even as there is but one God, one Lord, one faith, one hope of our calling; one general rule, or manner of converſation, preſcribed for all. There are, indeed,

deed, ſome peculiar obligations and duties reſulting from our reſpective relations and circumſtances in life. There are certain things incumbent upon the aged, which are not ſo, upon the young; at leaſt not in the ſame degree: As, on the other hand, there are ſome, to which youth are more eſpecially obliged; and ſome follies, indiſcretions and vices, which they need more particularly to be warned againſt. But theſe are no more than circumſtantial differences. True ſobriety, wiſdom or religion, is ſtill eſſentially one and the ſame thing, not only in old and young, but in male and female, bond and free; the particular duties which are proper and peculiar to theſe ſtates or conditions reſpectively, making no eſſential difference. As a man in health may in reaſon be bound to do ſome things which a ſick one is not, and *vice verſâ*; or as a man in civil office and authority may be bound to do ſome things which a man in a private capacity is not obliged to do, yea, cannot do lawfully or innocently; and yet a truly wiſe and ſober man is of the ſame religion both in health and ſickneſs, and whether he ſuſtains a public, or only a private character: So the old and the young, male and female, the great and ſmall, all perſons in general, are under obligation to be of the ſame religion, eſſentially conſidered, notwithſtanding ſome differences in their reſpective duties, ariſing out of their particular relations and circumſtances in life. And the ſame ſpirit of truth, of virtue and wiſdom, actually reſides, operates in, and actuates them all, if they are truly ſober-minded.

Now, that ſobriety of mind to which young men are to be exhorted, is unqueſtionably a *religious* ſobriety; founded in a due regard to almighty God; conformable to the dictates of right reaſon, and ſuch as all perſons in general, of whatever age or condition, are under obligation to; and including, moreover, whatever particular duties are, either excluſively, or more eſpecially, incumbent upon the young. It cannot, ſurely, be ſuppoſed that the apoſtle, in the text, intended any thing ſhort of a truly religious, pious, or godly ſobriety of mind; as was juſt now intimated. And there is the more reaſon for particularly obſerving this to you; becauſe there is ſomething that often paſſes in the world under the name of ſobriety, which, tho' really implied and comprehended therein, and therefore good and commendable in its place, does yet by no means come up to the full and proper idea hereof; but is eſſentially defective, being without any piety at bottom.

This matter deſerves to be more particularly ſtated and explained. We ſometimes ſpeak of ſobriety particularly in oppoſition to intemperance in eating and drinking; and when we mention any one as a ſober man, we mean, perhaps, no more than that he is free from theſe groſs and ſhameful vices. Sometimes by a ſober man, we mean only one that is not addicted to lewd, laſcivious practices. Sometimes by a ſober man, we mean no more than one who is externally grave and ſolid, in contradiſtinction from a light, airy and fantaſtic one. Sometimes we uſe the ſame word in a little larger ſenſe; meaning perhaps, by a ſober man, one that is of a grave and ſerious deportment in general; free from all the groſs vices of intemperance, and debauchery, of rioting and laſciviouſneſs; and one that ſteadily minds his proper worldly buſineſs, being, in that reſpect, a good member of ſociety. Now, altho' theſe things are all really commendable in their places, and, without doubt, included in that ſobriety of mind which is intended in the text; yet they are an extremely imperfect and deficient notion of it. This appears, indeed, in ſome meaſure, from what has been already ſaid, reſpecting the neceſſity of internal ſobriety; which is not neceſſarily implied in ſuch an externally grave and ſober converſation. But what I ſtill more particularly intend here, is, that this idea of ſobriety is very defective and imperfect, inaſmuch as it does not neceſſarily ſuppoſe a due regard to God, or any truly *religious* principle, as the ſpring and ſource of it.

An Atheiſt, or the fool who ſaith in his heart, There is no God, may poſſibly be a ſober man in this low and partial ſenſe. There is ſuch a thing as conſtitutional gravity, or a natural ſedateneſs and ſolidity, and ſort of averſion to thoſe groſs vices in ſome men: Or a mere ſenſe of decency may preſerve ſome therefrom, while they are deſtitute both of the love and fear of God, or of all religious principle. A perſon may abſtain from them, and in that partial ſenſe be a ſober man, from worldly prudence and policy only; motives, which tho' not poſitively evil, yet cannot be accounted good in a religious, or even moral ſenſe: For, to be good in this ſenſe, ſuppoſes a regard to God, and to moral obligations.

LET me add, tho' it may ſeem ſtrange, perhaps, at the firſt thought, that it is poſſible this external ſobriety of behaviour may, in ſome caſes, be owing to a poſitively wrong and vicious principle: So that if a perſon were of a leſs degenerate and depraved mind than he is in ſome reſpects, he would of courſe alſo have leſs of this outward gravity and ſobriety. This obſervation might be illuſtrated and confirmed by divers examples; but one may ſuffice. A man, then, may be worldly-minded and covetous to a prodigious degree; having all his thoughts and deſires centred on earthly riches, and his mind continually employed on the methods of obtaining and keeping them; while he "ſays to "the gold, Thou art my hope; and to the fine "gold, Thou art my confidence." Now this is unqueſtionably an irrational, vicious principle; a poſitively wrong and depraved turn of mind. And yet it is, in its natural conſequences and operations, a check, and powerful reſtraint to the vices of leudneſs and luxury, of riot and debauchery. Such a predominant, boundleſs love of riches, naturally and directly leads to a diligent application to worldly buſineſs; to an external gravity of deportment; and to ſobriety of converſation, in that partial ſenſe of it, ſpoken of above; or as it ſtands in oppoſition to the waſting, impoveriſhing vices of idleneſs, luxury, and an exceſſive indulgence of the ſenſual appetites. Theſe vices are, in their very nature, incompatible with extreme avarice. Nor did the world ever yet ſee a thorough MISER, that was addicted to them; ſeldom one, who did not loudly declaim againſt them as odious, ſcandalous and *ruinous* ones. Were ſuch a grave, rich—poor—happy—miſerable man, freer from this particular predominant vice, he might very probably have leſs external ſobriety; and, inſtead of always preaching againſt the follies, extravagances, and criminal exceſſes of young men, ſometimes condeſcend to make one of a party with them in theſe exceſſes—Mere pride, that hateful ſin, may, in ſome caſes, be ſuppoſed to produce the like external gravity and ſobriety, by abſorbing, as it were, all the feebler luſts and paſſions. In ſhort, it comes to this at laſt, that one enormous, gigantic and voracious vice,

"Like Aaron's ſerpent, ſwallows up the reſt". *

THUS, you ſee, it is poſſible, not only for real, but great and enormous vices of the mind, to contribute to the appearance of virtue and ſobriety in the external converſation; particularly in the inſtances which have now been mentioned. But that ſobriety to which all, and young men in particular, are to be exhorted, as was ſaid before, is primarily an internal ſobriety of the mind; and not meerly ſo, but a truly religious ſobriety, reſulting from a proper regard to God, his authority and commandments. Whatever ſobriety, whether of mind or manners,

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* POPE.

or both, may be conceived of without piety, without religious principle; this is not that which is intended in the text. It is eſſentially defective; it does not deſerve the name of ſobriety in a religious ſenſe, tho' it may be ſo called in a civil or political one; and tho' it may contribute to a man's reputation and intereſt in the world; yea, may render him a very uſeful and reſpectable member of ſociety. Nor ſhould we, indeed, ever indulge to groundleſs ſuſpicions about the ſincerity of particular perſons; which were highly injurious and criminal.

IT muſt be obſerved farther, that the ſobriety to which you are exhorted, is not only in general a religious, but a truly *Chriſtian* ſobriety of mind and manners: Such as correſponds to the faith of the goſpel, and to the commandments of God as promulgated by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore preſuppoſes belief in him as the light, the ſaviour and judge of the world. We may be very certain that the great apoſtle Paul, (who himſelf deſired neither to preach nor to know any thing,in compariſon of " Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified") giving directions to Titus as a miniſter of the goſpel, and enjoining him amongſt other things, to exhort young men to ſobriety, had in his mind nothing ſhort of that ſobriety which is in its nature truly chriſtian; agreeable to the glorious diſcoveries, and the genius of the goſpel; ſuch an one as is regulated by its precepts, and made manifeſt in a converſation becoming this divine inſtitution. It were quite unnatural to ſuppoſe that the apoſtle had in view, only ſuch a ſobriety as a meer pagan who believes the being of a God, may poſſibly be the ſubject of: Nay, it would be ſo, to ſuppoſe he intended only ſuch a ſobriety as a Jew, ſtill under the Moſaic diſpenſation, might poſſeſs, or practiſe. It cannot be reaſonably imagined, that he would have had Titus exhort the young men of Crete, who were partly Gentiles, and partly Jews by birth, to be ſober-minded upon the principles of the gentile theology, which were ſo vain and abſurd; and which he himſelf every where decried: Nor yet only upon the true principles of natural religion; which diſcovers not any way wherein ſinful creatures may certainly obtain eternal life: Nor yet, laſtly, upon the footing of the Moſaic law, which was "weak thro' the fleſh"; and of which the ſame apoſtle himſelf ſays, that as many as are of the works of it, "are under a curſe." If we conſider the character of the writer, and of the perſon to whom he wrote, together with the time, occaſion and circumſtances hereof, we cannot doubt but that St. Paul's meaning was, that Titus ſhould exhort the Cretian young men to receive the revelation of the grace of God by his Son from heaven, upon its proper evidences; and to live in a practical conformity to the holy precepts of the goſpel.

THAT he intended nothing below, or ſhort of, ſuch a truly chriſtian ſobriety of mind, is farther evident from hence. The ſeveral exhortations which Titus is enjoined to give to the old and young, &c. reſpectively, are introduced thus, with particular reference to ſome perſons, "whoſe mouths were to be ſtoped, —eſpecially thoſe of the circumciſion"; —"But ſpeak "thou," ſays the apoſtle, "the things which be"come SOUND DOCTRINE: That the aged "men," &c. And one reaſon particularly aſſigned, why Titus ſhould teach, and exhort to, theſe things, and others practiſe them, is, "that the WORD OF GOD be not blaſphemed." Now, certainly, what the apoſtle intended by the word of God, and ſound doctrine, is neither more nor leſs than the goſpel of God. This, if proof were needed, would be manifeſt from a parallel paſſage in his firſt epiſtle to Timothy— "And if there be any other thing that is con"trary to SOUND DOCTRINE, *according to the* "*glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was* "*committed to my truſt*"†. This goſpel of the kingdom then, is the ſound doctrine intended, and that word of God, which ſhould not be blaſphemed. Who then can doubt, but that the ſobriety of mind ſpoken of by the apoſtle, is the ſame thing in effect, with the belief and practice of the chriſtian religion? Or, if any like this expreſſion better,—a practical faith in the goſpel; tho', for my own part, I know of no real difference in the ſenſe of them.

THE ſame thing is farther manifeſt, beyond all doubt, from the words of the apoſtle a few verſes after the text: Where he ſuggeſts ſome other motives to, or reaſons for, the obſervation of the ſeveral exhortations before-mentioned:—"That they

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† 1 Tim. 1. 10, 11.

" may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in " all things. For the grace of God—hath ap" peared—teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs " and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly— " looking for that bleſſed hope, and—our Saviour " Jeſus Chriſt; who gave himſelf for us, that " he might redeem us," &c. The text being conſidered thus in connexion with what preceeds and follows it; the ſobriety intended therein, is evidently ſuch a ſobriety of mind, not as Socrates or Plato, not as Cicero or Seneca taught, tho' in ſome reſpects truly excellent; nor yet merely ſuch as Moſes and the prophets taught; much leſs ſtill, ſuch as Lord *Shaftsbury* and Lord *Bollingbroke* taught: But ſuch as the LORD FROM HEAVEN, and his inſpired apoſtles taught; and ſuch as all are to practiſe, who hope to aſcend thither where he is, to behold, and to partake of his glory. And whoſoever pretends to exhort any, whether old or young, to be ſober-minded, without keeping in view, and proceeding upon, this truly divine plan—the doctrine of our redemption from ſin and death by Jeſus Chriſt, and of life and immortality bro't to light thro' the goſpel, at beſt does his work to the halves; and, by no means, frames his exhortation according to the manifeſt deſign, and true ſpirit of the text.

THUS, my young brethren, I have given you ſome general and imperfect idea of the ſobriety to which you are exhorted: Nothing beyond this was intended by the foregoing remarks relative hereto. Let me now deſcend to a more diſtinct explanation of it, in conformity to this general idea, and to theſe curſory obſervations, which I ſhall ſtill keep in view; and if you ſhould do the ſame, it might not be unuſeful to you. In the firſt place, then,

I. THIS ſobriety of mind is founded in a firm belief of God's being and perfections, his moral government and univerſal providence, agreeably to the light of nature, or natural reaſon, and to the expreſs doctrine of holy ſcripture; for theſe do not contradict, but mutually confirm and illuſtrate each other. One of the ſacred writers uſes a very bold, and equally noble figure, in ſpeaking of the clear evidence which God, who is inviſible, hath given of his exiſtence and perfections, to mankind in general, by the viſible effects of his power. "That which may be known "of God," ſaith he, "is manifeſt in [or to] them" [the gentile nations;] "for God hath ſhewn it "unto them. For the INVISIBLE THINGS "OF HIM from the creation of the world are "CLEARLY SEEN, being underſtood by the "things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." † Altho' the world by wiſdom knew not God; i. e. tho' mankind in general did not actually attain to any tolerable knowledge of the true God by natural reaſon and philoſophy; yet it is certain, even upon principles of reaſon, both that there is One, and but One God; an all-perfect being: One, and but One, who is underived, unbegotton, proceeding from none, and abſolutely independent: "Of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom [of conſequence] are all things;"—all other perſons and beings, whether viſible or inviſible. So that no one, of whom it can be truly and properly ſaid, that he is either made or created, begotten or produced, derived from, or dependent upon another, is himſelf the unmade and uncreated, the unbegotton and unproduced, the underived and independent Creator, or only living and true God: For this were a contradiction in terms.

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† Rom. I. 19. 20.

THE divine attributes, as diſcovered to us by the wonderful works and word of God in conjunction, are, eternity, independence, or neceſſary ſelf-exiſtence; immenſity, or omnipreſence; incorporeity, or ſpirituality; boundleſs power, perfect knowledge, and unerring wiſdom; perfect purity, holineſs and juſtice, truth and faithfulneſs, goodneſs, mercy, and immutability. For in all theſe reſpects, in all truly divine perfections, God is neceſſarily, and therefore immutably the ſame, even from everlaſting to everlaſting, "without variableneſs, or ſhadow of "turning." And as God originally created all things; ſo he continually preſerves, preſides over, and governs them by his providence, in the moſt wiſe, righteous, good and gracious manner: Being a lover of all virtue and goodneſs, and abhorring all vice and wickedneſs, even while he is merciful to the wicked; good and kind even to the unthankful and to the evil. It will not be amiſs to obſerve further here, that the holy ſcriptures ſpeak much oftener, and far more largely and particularly, of God's goodneſs and mercy, than of any of his other perfections; aſſuring us, that "the Lord is good to ALL, and his tender mercies over ALL his works;" that "there is none good but One, that is God;" that "God is love"—goodneſs and love itſelf, perfect and univerſal, eternal and immutable love: And it is repeated no leſs than twenty-ſix times in one pſalm, that "his mercy endureth for ever."†

Now, faith in God, his perfections and providence, and particularly in his goodneſs and mercy, is not only an eſſential ingredient in, but the very foundation of, all true ſobriety, or religion. For, in the language of inſpiration, which is in this reſpect at leaſt, the language of reaſon alſo, "without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; for he "that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, "and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him."‡ Though I cannot but obſerve by the way, that ſome modern pretended reformers of the ſuppoſed errors and hereſies among us, ſeem rather to have aimed at eſtabliſhing it as a fundamental article of faith, that God is NOT "a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him;" but that men may ſeek him, not only earneſtly and diligently, but do ſo all their lives, and yet not find his favor extended to them, or finally receive any reward of him—except the reward of unrighteouſneſs in eternal torments! But if this be accounted orthodoxy, I muſt, for my own part, humbly confeſs with the apoſtle Paul, "that after the way which they call hereſy, "ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers; believing "all things which are written in the law and the "prophets," [and the goſpel of Chriſt alſo:] "and have HOPE TOWARDS GOD:" § Which even the beſt men upon earth can hardly have, upon the principles of ſuch a ſpurious orthodoxy as that juſt now referred to.

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† Pſalm 136. ‡ Heb. XI. 6. § Acts XXIV. 14. 15.

But to return. If, inſtead of believing the exiſtence and perfections, the moral government and univerſal providence of the equally great and good God, you have him not in all your thoughts; if you do not duly regard him; but baniſh him, as it were, out of his own world, the univerſe which ſprung from nothing at his word: If you do thus, it is impoſſible that you ſhould have any true ſobriety of mind, any real wiſdom. For the knowledge or fear of the Lord, is even literally "the beginning of wiſdom." They that know not God, know nothing as they ought to know it; nor do any thing as they ought to do it.

Let me therefore, my young brethren, take occaſion here to caution you againſt liſtening with a favourable ear, to any atheiſtical notions; ſuch as ſtrike at the being, attributes, or moral government of God; and, thereby, at the very root of all religion and virtue. There are not wanting thoſe in this apoſtate, this fooliſh and wicked world, who ſcruple not even to tell others, they are fools, by intimating that they "ſay "in their hearts, *There is no God;*" or at leaſt, no ſuch holy, wiſe and righteous one as is commonly ſuppoſed; none, from whom we have any thing to fear if we do evil, or to hope if we do well. And there are ſome young men, tho', I would charitably hope, not amongſt you;—yea, ſome that are more advanced in years, who either from an unwillingneſs to part with their luſts, or, at beſt, from great levity of mind, and an affectation of ſingularity, liſten with pleaſure to ſuch ſenſeleſs notions, when they hear them advanced; and read the books with delight, in which ſome perſons even of the laſt and preſent age, have ſhewn a ſtrange ambition to record their own folly and impiety to the ages that are to come. Take heed, my beloved brethren, leſt any of you ſhould alſo be carried away with theſe errors of the wicked; of ſuch fools as theſe.

I HARDLY need deſire you, by way of antidote againſt the poiſon, and mortal venom of ſuch principles, to lift your eyes to the heavens above; to obſerve the ſtupendous magnitude, the regular motions, the beautiful order, of the numerous worlds that roll there; or to aſk you, how they came there? and by whom they are preſerved from age to age in this wonderful order and harmony? I ſcarce need, for this end, to deſire you even to look down upon the earth, or to look round the world which you inhabit; in which there are actually innumerable, indefinite marks and characters of infinite power, of the moſt conſummate wiſdom and goodneſs. It will be ſufficient if you conſider thoſe microcoſms, thoſe little worlds, your own bodies; which are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made;"—with amazing ſkill, an art truly admirable and aſtoniſhing to every attentive obſerver. And whoſe hand formed and faſhioned theſe? Certainly no human one: The art, wiſdom and power of all the ſons of Adam united, would not ſuffice for the forming a ſingle fly, emmit or mite. Nay, all human wiſdom cannot even comprehend the workmanſhip and art of the leaſt inſect; tho' it may ſee enough thereof, to be at once convinced and confounded. What then will you ſay of your own bodies? Whoſe workmanſhip are they?

BUT if even your bodies muſt neceſſarily be the product of a wiſdom, a ſkill, an art and power, ſo much ſurpaſſing all that is human; what will you ſay of your minds, your ſouls, which direct and governs them? From whence come knowledge, reflexion, memory? from whence, will, choice and liberty? from whence the power of at once looking back on what is paſt, and forward on what is future? Are theſe intellectual powers and faculties of yours, eternal and neceſſary? No. It is but a few days ſince you yourſelves came into exiſtence. Were they then without any cauſe? No. Nothing can be ſo, that is not both eternal and neceſſary. Were they then the product of inert, unknowing, ſenſeleſs matter? That cannot be: Knowledge, choice and power cannot, ſurely, be derived from that which is itſelf deſtitute of all knowledge, choice and power. From whence and from whom then, came theſe intellectual powers? To ſuppoſe that you need to be told, would hardly be conſiſtent with the very ſuppoſition, that you are poſſeſſed of them. From hence appears at once, the being and the ſpirituality of God; and the extreme ſtupidity of all image-worſhip. For there never was a more rational, a more con-

cluſive argument than this which follows—
"For-aſmuch then as WE are the OFFSPRING
"OF GOD, we ought not to think that the
"GODHEAD is like unto gold, or ſilver, or
"ſtone graven by art, and man's device." †

MOREOVER: Do not your moral faculties, particularly your ſenſe of right and wrong, juſtice and injuſtice, demonſtrate the moral character of Him, whoſe offspring you are? Undoubtedly, in the cleareſt manner; and, conſequently that, under his government, virtue ſhall be rewarded and vice puniſhed. Each man's own conſcience, is in a ſort a divine meſſenger, a prophet to himſelf; foretelling, as one may expreſs it, "a day wherein God will judge the "world in righteouſneſs." O then, let not this prophet within you, preach righteouſneſs and ſobriety, or prophecy to you, in vain. If you hearken to the dictates of this prophet, one may very ſafely conclude, that you will not reject the teſtimony of thoſe who appeared in the world in ancient times; and particularly, not "JESUS of Nazareth, who was a phophet "mighty in deed and word, before GOD, and all "the people." [Luke XXIV. 19.]—But this naturally brings me to obſerve more diſtinctly, tho' in conformity to what was intimated before,

II. THAT the ſobriety of mind to which you are exhorted, implies a belief of the goſpel, or of the chriſtian revelation: For it is not merely a religious, but a chriſtian ſobriety, that is intended in the text. And this certainly includes, or ſuppoſes, a belief of Chriſt's goſpel; a due regard to him in the high relation which he bears to mankind; a ſerious conſideration of his perſon, character, doctrine, precepts; the deſign of his manifeſtation and ſufferings in the fleſh; his reſurrection, aſcenſion, the glory to which he is exalted; his future appearing, and the end and conſequences thereof. Without the knowledge, belief, and conſideration of theſe things, there can be no ſobriety of mind, deſerving the name of Chriſtian. Let me therefore deſcend to a few particulars here; ſuch as ſeem to me very important. In doing which, I ſhall be obliged to be brief, and ſhall of choice, as far as I think conſiſtent with my own duty and your good, avoid every thing of controverſy; in which I do not delight. And,

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† Acts XVII. 29.

1. Of the perſon of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſtiled, in ſcripture, "the image of the inviſible God, the firſt born of every creature."‡ He often alluded to, and ſometimes ſpake expreſly of, a "glory which he had with the FATHER before the world was." To be re-admitted into which glory, he once earneſtly prayed, ſaying,—"O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee," &c.† It is ſaid of the Logos, or Word, that he was "in the beginning with God," and "was God;" that "all things were made by "[or thro'] him"§—And, in divers other places, the worlds, and all things, are ſaid to have been created by, or thro' him. Which paſſages, to ſay the leaſt, do not ſeem eaſily to admit the ſenſe put upon them by the learned Socinus and his

‡ Col. I. 15. † John XVII. 5. § John I. 1. 2. &c.

his followers; who underſtand them of the new creation, or the renovation of all things. This, I confeſs, appears to me to be a forced, very unnatural, and quite inadmiſſible interpretation of theſe paſſages.

BUT, to prevent your drawing any wrong inferences, on the other hand, from theſe expreſſions; let me remind you of two or three paſſages of ſcripture, which may help to explain them. In the epiſtle to the Epheſians, we find this expreſſion:—"GOD, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt."* In that to the Hebrews, the following: "GOD—hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son—by whom alſo HE made the worlds."|| Theſe paſſages may help to explain thoſe, in which the worlds, even all things, are ſpoken of as having been made, or created by, or thro' Chriſt the Son of God, without any particular mention of the FATHER. Moreover; to prevent any wrong inferences from its being ſaid by St. John, "*In the beginning* was the Word;" you need only to be reminded of the very firſt words in your bible: "*In the beginning* "God created the heaven and the earth." Again: To prevent any wrong inferences from Jeſus Chriſt's being ſtiled God, as he is ſeveral times in ſcripture; it will be ſufficient only to remind you of his own words on one or two occaſions. When the captious Jews charged him with blaſphemy, becauſe, as they ſaid, he, "being a man, made himſelf God;" his anſwer was, "Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, *ye* "*are gods?* If He *called them gods,* on whom

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* Ch. III. 9. || Ch. I. 1, 2.

" the word of GOD came, and the ſcripture cannot be broken: Say ye of him whom the FATHER hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, " Thou blaſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid, *I am the Son* " *of* GOD?"§ And here by the way, I cannot but obſerve that many, inſtead of being content with giving our Saviour this ſcriptural title, ſo often taken by himſelf, and given him by the ſacred writers, " The Son of God," chuſe commonly to change it into, *God the Son*; an expreſſion which never once occurs in the holy ſcriptures. With how fair, candid and pious an intention they do this, others may *conjecture*, but themſelves doubtleſs *know*—But my buſineſs here was only to remind you of two or three paſſages, for explaining thoſe in which Chriſt is ſtiled God. I have given you a very obſervable one already. The next ſhall alſo be the words of our Lord himſelf, in his prayer to the Father, a little before his death: " And this is life eternal, " that they might know THEE the only true " GOD, and him whom thou haſt ſent, Jeſus " Chriſt."† [This is the literal tranſlation] Another paſſage directly to the preſent purpoſe, ſhall be from the apoſtle Paul, who is, by ſome, ſuppoſed himſelf once or twice to have ſtiled Jeſus Chriſt, GOD: If ſo, it is but candid to let him be his own interpreter—" There is none other " GOD but ONE. For tho' there be that are " called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; " (as there be *gods many*, and *lords many*) but " to us there is but ONE GOD, the FATHER, of

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§ John X. 33--36. † John XVII. 3.

"whom are all things, and we in him; and one "Lord Jeſus Chriſt, BY whom are all things, "and we BY him."‡

WITH reſpect to the perſon of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it muſt be farther obſerved, "That in the fulneſs of time God ſent forth his ſon, made of a woman;"—that the "Word was made fleſh;" that "foraſmuch as the children were partakers "of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took part of "the ſame;"—that he was "found in faſhion "as a man;"—and is often ſtiled "the ſon "of man," and "a man;"—"Jeſus, a man ap-"proved of God;"—"the man Chriſt Jeſus;"—"that man whom God hath ordained," &c.

IT ſhould, moreover, be very particularly obſerved, that GOD, even the FATHER, did, in a very particular and eminent, a tranſcendently glorious and inexpreſſible manner, dwell in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, manifeſting his glory in, by and thro' him. On which account it doubtleſs is, that he is ſometimes called God; and that they who had ſeen him, are ſaid to have "ſeen the FATHER;" who yet, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is "the inviſible GOD;" and whoſe "image," even "the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon," hypoſtaſis, ſubſtance, or eſſence, Jeſus Chriſt is ſaid to be. As to the particular mode of the divine inhabitation in Chriſt, it is neither revealed, nor to be comprehended by mortal men; who cannot even comprehend the manner in which their own ſpirits dwell in their bodies. But I repeat it, leſt I ſhould be miſunderſtood, that it was "God, even the Father," according to ſcripture, that dwelt or inhabited in Jeſus Chriſt, in this ineffably glorious manner. For thus he declares of himſelf, and his marvellous works: "I ſpeak not of myſelf; but "*the* FATHER *that dwelleth in me*, HE doeth "the works."* The like manner of expreſſion is common with him. According to which, it was not ſome other divine Being, agent or perſon, diſtinct from the FATHER, that dwelt in the man Chriſt Jeſus, as ſome have imagined, (not very conſiſtently with the divine unity) but the FATHER himſelf. And it is no leſs the poſitive doctrine of ſcripture, That there is but ONE GOD, the FATHER, "who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all,"—even the "GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt"; than it is, That there is but one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "the "Son of the FATHER in truth and love;"— "the Son of the BLESSED;"— "the Son of the HIGHEST;" and of whom an angel from heaven propheſied thus before his birth: "He "ſhall be great, and ſhall be called *the Son of* "*the* HIGHEST; and the LORD GOD ſhall "give unto him the throne of his father David." † But to proceed,

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‡ Cor. VIII. 4. 5. 6.

2. THE general and grand, both the primary and ultimate end of Chriſt's coming down from heaven, or of his incarnation, was, to glorify his God and Father, by doing his will. "For I "am come down from heaven," ſaid he, "not "to do mine own will, but the will of him that "ſent me"‡—"I honour my Father—I ſeek "not mine own glory."‖—"I have not ſpoken

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* John XIV. 10. † Luke I. 32. ‡ John VI. 38. ‖ Ch. VIII. 49, 50.

" of myſelf, but the Father which ſent me, he " gave me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay, " and what I ſhould ſpeak—I ſpeak therefore, " even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak."§ —" I have glorified thee on earth; I have " finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do: " And now, O Father, glorify thou me with " thine own ſelf, &c."* This general end of Chriſt's incarnation, comprehends all others. But more particularly,

3. One principal end of Chriſt's manifeſtation in the fleſh, was, to make known the Father; the nature and truth of God, or the principles of true religion, in a more clear, full and perfect manner, than they had been made known before, by Moſes or any of the ancient prophets, or even John, that burning and ſhining light; the greateſt of all the prophets, till the Son of God himſelf appeared in that character from heaven.

At the time of our Lord's coming into the world, the Jewiſh revelation was very groſly corrupted; the prieſts having long " taught for doctrines the commandments of men;" ſo that tho' they were not wholly ignorant of the true God, yet " in vain did they worſhip him." Among the gentile nations, there were hardly any traces of true religion to be found. Divine knowledge, the only true wiſdom, was far from obtaining among the nations of the world, in proportion as the polite arts and ſciences had done. In many countries, particularly Perſia, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece and Italy, theſe arts and ſciences had been carried to a ſurpriſing degree of perfection. The poet's numbers were harmonious, and his ſong ſublime. The muſician almoſt enchanted wild beaſts, and the woods which they haunted, as well as ſavage men. The orator thunder'd and lighten'd; and, at pleaſure, either rais'd or allay'd a ſtorm in the breaſts of his auditors. The nobleſt piles and ſtructures aroſe under the hands of the architect. The canvaſs was taught to glow with life, borrowed from the painter's pencil; and braſs and marble to breath under the chiſſel of the ſtatuary: While the aſtronomer ſurveyed and meaſured the heavens; even thoſe heavens which declare the glory of God. But notwithſtanding all theſe improvements, theſe wonderful efforts of human genius and induſtry, "the world by wiſdom knew not God!" With reſpect to the knowledge of Him, and of true religion, there was in fact no material difference betwixt the moſt refined, and the moſt ſavage and barbarous nations under heaven. Witneſs the multitude of the gods and goddeſſes acknowledged in them; ſo great, that it were eaſier to call all the ſtars by their names, than to number ſuch a promiſcuous rabble—heroes, ſtrumpets, diſeaſes, plagues, monſters, vices, conſtellations, beaſts, birds, and creeping things! And if ſuch were the gods, judge you, what the worſhippers muſt have been; how wiſe, pure and holy! †

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§ John VIII. 49, 50. * Ch. XVII. 4, 5.

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† Upwards of thirty thouſand pagan deities have been mentioned by writers. Min. Fælix alone, may ſatisfy any perſon of a moderate curioſity, upon this ſubject.

SUCH, in brief, was the religious ſtate of the world; ſuch thick darkneſs covered its inhabitants, eſpecially the heathen nations, at the time when God tho't fit, laſt of all, to ſpeak unto men by his Son from heaven. He accordingly appeared, ſaying, "I am the light of the world; "he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in dark-"neſs, but ſhall have the light of life."† In which words he tacitly compares himſelf to the ſun in the heavens, that ruleth by day; enlightening, warming, and diffuſing bleſſings on all below: Which was indeed agreeable to one of the glorious characters, under which he had been propheſied of—"the ſun of righteouſneſs "ariſing with healing in his beams." No man had ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who was in the boſom of the Father, declared him to the world. And as none perfectly knew the Son but the Father; ſo neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son revealeth him. He came to bear witneſs to the truth; and did it with ſuch clearneſs, and convincing evidence of his coming from God, that his few diſciples might then, with great propriety ſay, "We know that we "are of the truth, and the whole world lieth "in wickedneſs. And we know that the Son "of God is come, and hath given us an under-"ſtanding, that we might know him that is "true: and we are in HIM THAT IS TRUE, in "HIS Son Jeſus Chriſt. THIS is the true God, "and eternal life."‖

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† John VIII. 12. ‖ 1 John V. 19, 20. Compare John XVII. 3. Which clearly determines the ſenſe of this text, if people will be determined ſolely by ſcripture authority.

4. JESUS CHRIST came into the world, not merely as a light to lighten it with the knowledge of the "only true God"; but to declare his will and commandments authoritatively in his name. "I am come", ſaith he, "in "my Father's name", &c. He came into it as a preacher of righteouſneſs; to inculcate obedience to God's laws which were already known; to reſcue others from the corrupt interpretations, which by time, the ignorance of the people, and more eſpecially the wickedneſs of the prieſts, had been put upon them; whereby "the command-"ment of God was made of none effect" He came to put an end to the peculiarities of the Jewiſh diſpenſation; to "gather together in one the children "of God that were ſcattered abroad"; to form them into one ſpiritual body, or church, under himſelf as head; that there might be "one fold, and one ſhepherd" And he promulgated certain new laws and ordinances relative to this ſpiritual kingdom, for the due interior regulation of it, and for its ſupport and enlargement, till "all nations ſhould flow into it".

5. HE came to give mankind the moſt perfect and engaging example of obedience to the will of God; of all piety and righteouſneſs, humility and charity, temperance and patience;—a living example in frail human fleſh. For tho' he were made in the "likeneſs of ſinful fleſh;" yet in him was no ſin: He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners. He ſaid to his diſciples upon a certain occaſion, "I have given you an example that ye ſhould do as I have done to you." The like might have been ſaid on other

occaſions. Indeed, he admoniſhed his diſciples in a more general way, to keep his commandments, "that they might abide in his love, even," ſaith he, "as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." And the apoſtle Peter ſays of him, that he "left us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps."

6. HE came to make an atonement for the ſins of the world; "to put away ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf." This he did upon the croſs, when he offered himſelf up to God, as a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot. He is ſaid to have redeemed men to God by his blood; to have died for us, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us unto God. And it ſhould be particularly obſerved here, that he died thus, not only for a few particular perſons, as ſome ſeem to imagine, but "died for all,"—"taſted death for every man;" and "gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time." Agreeably whereto, the apoſtle John ſpeaks of him under the following character—"Jeſus Chriſt the "righteous, who is the propitiation for our ſins, "and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of "the WHOLE WORLD". So the apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of it as the ſubſtance of that miniſtry of reconciliation which he had received, "That "God was, in Chriſt, reconciling the WORLD "unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto "them". And he accordinlgy beſeeches all, in Chriſt's ſtead, to be "reconciled unto God."

7. HE was raiſed from the dead, and exalted to the higheſt heavens; not only to "appear

in the preſence of God" as an interceſſor and advocate with him for his diſciples; but to be crowned with glory and honor, as being by the Father appointed heir, and Lord, and Judge of all; or as having all power given unto him in heaven and in earth.

8. HE is to be revealed from heaven at an appointed time; "the time of the reſtitution of "all things, ſpoken of by all the prophets ſince "the world began", in the glory of the Father, to judge the world in righteouſneſs—Let me now cloſe theſe ſhort remarks with the words of the apoſtle Paul—"Then cometh the end, when he "ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, "even the FATHER; when he ſhall have put "down all rule, and all authority and power. "For he muſt reign till he hath put all enemies "under his feet. The laſt enemy that ſhall be "deſtroyed is death. For, *He hath put all* "*things under his feet*: But when he ſaith, all "things are put under him, it is manifeſt that "HE is excepted which did put all things under "him. And when all things ſhall be ſubdued "unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be "ſubject unto HIM that put all things under "him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL!"†

THE ſeveral things thus briefly hinted at, I conſider only as ſome of the more obvious and important ends of Chriſt's mediation; ſome of which are ſpoken of, or referred to, in almoſt every page of the new teſtament, as things particularly worthy of our daily meditation. Nei-

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† 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

ther can you be ſober-minded, as you ought to be, without believing, and often thinking upon theſe capital doctrines of the goſpel. For, as has been before obſerved, without chriſtian faith, there can be no ſuch thing as chriſtian practice or ſobriety, in the old or young.

LET me, therefore, here take occaſion, my beloved young brethren, to warn you againſt the fatal principles of our modern deiſts. As Jeſus Chriſt has his miniſters to exhort you to believe his goſpel, and to be ſober-minded, in order to your preſent and eternal good; the devil has alſo his emiſſaries and apoſtles to diſſwade you from it: men who, in all countries that are bleſt with liberty, abuſe that liberty by "ſpeaking evil of the things which they underſtand not": men who both declaim and write againſt the goſpel of their ſalvation; and have even the hardineſs to ridicule and blaſpheme what angels deſire to look into, and conſider at once with delight and admiration;—all thoſe of them, I mean, who "kept their firſt eſtate": For, as to the reſt, they doubtleſs blaſpheme theſe things alſo; tho' they neither diſbelieve nor riducle them; but "believe and tremble."--Theſe men, in their talk and writings, commonly pretend great benevolence and goodwill. They will profeſs their ſorrow to ſee you enſlaved with ſuperſtitious notions and fancies about revelation. They will tell you, perhaps, that you are debarred from the innocent pleaſures of life, and held in a miſerable kind of bondage, by the fabled terrors of another world. Whereas, could you caſt off theſe childiſh prejudices

judices of education, and become One of them, you would enjoy a moſt delightful eaſe and freedom of mind, from a full perſwaſion, either that there is no future ſtate, or at leaſt no hell, where frail creatures are to be tormented for a few ſallies and indiſcretions: And, that you may depend upon it, if you ſhould ſurvive the ſhipwrack of death, you ſhall go to ſome far happier region—ſome Eliſian field, where you may ſport and play to eternity.

THESE men, however, generally pretend to a great regard for moral virtue; more eſpecially, univerſal love to mankind: Nay, they ſometimes even ſpeak reſpectfully of God—And, to uſe the words of the apoſtle, "No marvel; for Satan "himſelf is transformed into an angel of light. "Therefore it is no great thing if his mini-"ſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters "of righteouſneſs; whoſe end ſhall be accord-"ing to their works ‡". In a word, theſe are the very men whom the apoſtle Peter deſcribes, and forewarns you to beware of, in the following words: "Theſe are wells without water, "clouds that are carried with a tempeſt, to whom "the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever. For "when they ſpeak great ſwelling words of vanity, "they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, "through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were "clean eſcaped from them who live in error: "While they promiſe them liberty, they them-"ſelves are the ſervants of corruption; for of "whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he "brought in bondage."

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‡ 2 Cor xi 14, 15.

THE divine miſſion and authority of Jeſus Chriſt, or, in other words, the truth of the chriſtian religion, is eſtabliſhed by " many infallible proofs". However enthuſiaſts have declaimed againſt reaſon, and rational preachers, while themſelves were deplorable examples of the contrary, the religion of Chriſt is a moſt reaſonable religion; the wiſdom, as well as the power of God to ſalvation, to every one that ſincerely believes it. Both its doctrines and precepts, as delivered by him and his apoſtles, are rational in the higheſt ſenſe, however they have been perverted ſince; bearing a truly divine character, to thoſe that have eyes to ſee, inſtead of being blinded by the God of this world. In Jeſus Chriſt were fulfilled many illuſtrious prophecies. He wrought ſtill more numerous and aſtoniſhing miracles, by the finger of that God who dwelt in him. He was alſo raiſed from the dead himſelf, after having raiſed others, " by the power of the Father". He was often ſeen and converſed with by many credible witneſſes, who had well known him before. He was viſibly taken up into heaven: And, ſoon after, in conformity to his own promiſe, many miraculous powers were beſtowed upon his apoſtles, and other diſciples; particularly the gift of tongues; by means of which the goſpel, under the apparent management of a few fiſhermen, and other poor Galileans, made a ſurprizing progreſs in oppoſition to the united wit, malice and power of the world, both Jewiſh and Gentile. And divers of Chriſt's and his apoſtle's predictions have ſince been fulfilled, and others of them are daily fulfilling.

THE plain conſequence of theſe facts, is, That Jeſus Chriſt was, indeed, the Son of GOD; and that the religion which bears his ſacred name, is the true religion, which, in all reaſon, you are bound to receive with the profoundeſt reverence and gratitude. Let me therefore juſt remind you further here, of the words of Peter in his own, and the name of the other apoſtles, upon a particular occaſion. When many of our Lords diſciples forſook him, in the days of his fleſh, and walked no more with him, he turned and ſaid, in an affectionate manner, " Will ye alſo go away?—at once intimating his unwillingneſs that they ſhould do ſo, and his determination to leave them to their own choice and liberty. Hereupon Peter made the following anſwer, in which you, my young brethren, muſt be left to join with him or not, as God ſhall give you light—" Lord,[†] to whom ſhall " we go! Thou haſt the words of eternal life. " And we believe, and are ſure, that thou art " that Chriſt, *the Son of the living* GOD."[‡]

HAVING thus ſhewn that ſobriety of mind ſuppoſes (1) A belief of God's being and perfections; and (2) Of the chriſtian revelation; let me now obſerve,

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[†] John vi. 68, 69.

[‡] Dr. LELAND's excellent *Review of the Deiſtical Writers*, deſerves to be read by every young man who has leiſure for reading.

III. THAT it alſo implies, thinking ſoberly of yourſelves. This is an eſſential, a moſt important ingredient in chriſtian ſobriety; and it comprehends divers particulars, which ſhall be mentioned with all convenient brevity. And,

1. THIS implies a ſenſe of your natural ignorance, or the native darkneſs of your underſtandings. You may conclude that I do not here intend any thing that is peculiar to you; but ſpeak with reference to what is common to you with others. All men in general are born into the world, abſolutely ignorant of every thing; they know nothing of what is paſſing in this world or any other. Whatever any know, it is not innate, or born with them; but acquired afterwards. And ſo feeble are their intellectual faculties, that however ambitious they are of knowing, or being thought to know a great deal, what they can actually attain to, is comparatively but very little, even tho' they ſpend much time in the purſuit of knowledge. They are as it were doomed to ignorance by the very condition of their birth, nature and life in this world, notwithſtanding either their thirſt after, or affectation of wiſdom. This is the ſentiment which is expreſſed by Zophar in the book of Job: "Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? "canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canſt thou "do? deeper than hell; what canſt thou know? "--He knoweth vain men—For vain man would "be wiſe, though man be born like a wild aſs's "colt †". Young men eſpecially, are generally

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† Chap. xi. 7—11.

prone to entertain too high a conceit of their knowledge, and of their capacity for knowing more: Which often makes them over-poſitive in their own way, and ſelf-ſufficient. It leads them to deſpiſe the opinions and counſels of others; of their parents, and other perſons, tho' older and, moſt probably, wiſer than themſelves. This is of pernicious conſequence in many reſpects. If, therefore, you would be ſober-minded, think ſoberly of, and know yourſelves: It becomes you to be modeſt, and ſelf-diffident; not to lean too much to your own underſtandings; but, from a conſciouſneſs of your inexperience, to liſten to advice, and endeavour to learn of others; tho' by no means to reſign up your own underſtandings implicitly to the dictates of any; and, leaſt of all, in matters of conſcience and religion, which are peculiarly your own concern. Indeed, you might well ſuſpect the probity of any man's deſign, whatever were his character, who ſhould perſwade you to put out, or to blind your own eyes in a thick wood; promiſing, that when you had done ſo, he would be your *faithful guide* out of it;— eſpecially if you had *money* about you. Whoever act ſuch a part as this by others in their ſpiritual concernments, they do not ſo well deſerve the name of miniſters of the goſpel, as that of thieves, robbers and aſſaſſines.

2. THINKING ſoberly of yourſelves, implies a due conſideration of your moral frailty and depravity: whereby, as in what was laſt mentioned, your natural ignorance, nothing is intended that

is peculiar to yourſelves, but what is common to the offspring of Adam. There is a great deal of perverſeneſs and vice, which may be conſidered as in ſome ſenſe natural to mankind; ariſing from ignorance, or weakneſs of underſtanding on the one hand, and from ſtrong paſſions on the other. Both theſe are certainly natural to mankind. And what is the natural, not to ſay, unavoidable conſequence of ſuch a union, or concurrence of ignorance and paſſion in the ſame ſubject, but irregularity of deſire, will and behaviour, in many reſpects. But how does the caſe ſtand in fact? Do not all go aſtray, at leaſt in ſome degree, from the paths of reaſon and virtue, very early in life? ſo early, that it occaſioned the Pſalmiſt to ſay, not indeed without a figure, that they are "eſ-"tranged from the womb; and go aſtray *aſſoon* "*as they are born, ſpeaking lies*". This, to be ſure, is not literally true; nor was it deſigned to be ſo underſtood. The meaning is, that the ignorance and paſſions of children are ſuch, that they ſpeak and act unreaſonably, and deviate from the rules of virtue, in a greater or leſs degree, almoſt aſſoon as they are capable of ſpeaking and acting at all. And the wiſer ſon of David has ſaid, to the ſame purpoſe, that "childhood and "youth are vanity"; and that "folly is bound "up in the heart of a child". By which he doubtleſs means ſomething that is in a degree vicious; not ſimple, unavoidable ignorance only: For he adds, that the "rod of correction will drive it far from him;" which could not be ſaid with propriety, of mere natural and unavoidable ignorance. It is not my deſign to ſuggeſt, that either you, or any others, were really and properly vicious, ſinful and criminal, before you were capable in any meaſure of diſtinguiſhing betwixt good and evil: Much leſs, that you were juſtly liable to eternal torments, either on account of any corruption of nature which you brought into the world with you, or by reaſon of the imputation of Adam's ſin to you. For I find nothing in the ſcriptures that implies either of theſe things; and, beyond them I do not chuſe to be wiſe. But were you not ſinful creatures, in a degree, aſſoon as you began to act viciouſly? Was not that very early in life? And is not this at leaſt, juſt matter of humiliation to you, and to all? If you are ſober-minded; if you think ſoberly of yourſelves, even as you ought to think, the moſt harmleſs and innocent of you will not be pure in your own eyes; but acknowledge that you are unclean; having been guilty of numberleſs irregular deſies, and faults; of many vicious actions, from your childhood, ſince you were actually capable of diſcerning betwixt good and evil. So that if God were ſtrict to mark iniquity, even the moſt innocent of you could not ſtand in judgment. What then would be the conſequence, as to the moſt criminal!

3. THIS leads me to obſerve, that thinking ſoberly of yourſelves, implies the ſerious conſideration of your ſtate as you are morally polluted creatures, guilty before God, and ſtanding in need both of purification, and forgiveneſs with God. That darkneſs of the human mind, that

irregularity of the will, and diſorder of the affections, which may juſtly be termed natural, in the ſenſe before explained, are certainly infelicities at leaſt, from which all, for their own ſakes, ſhould deſire deliverance; that inſtead of them, there may be knowledge in the mind, regularity in the will, and a due ſubordination of the paſſions and affections to right reaſon. Herein ſummarily conſiſts that moral purity which was juſt now hinted at; and which ſtands in oppoſition to the natural blindneſs and depravation of the mind. But you ought to conſider yourſelves, not merely as carrying about with you a mental diſeaſe, which needs a remedy; but alſo as culpable and criminal in the ſight of God, on account of your actual deviations from the rule of your duty, ſo far as you have really departed from it, in thought, word or deed; and therefore, as was ſaid before, ſtanding in need of forgiveneſs alſo. An holy God, tho' he may pity, and ſhew mercy to, yet muſt needs be diſpleaſed with, thoſe who knowingly violate his commandments, or the laws of reaſon and virtue; as you have all doubtleſs done in many inſtances. If God had been rigorouſly juſt, or deſtitute of mercy, you might have been caſt off by him even in childhood, for your ſins committed in that ſtate. Your tranſgreſſions have ſtill been growing more numerous, and, probably, more aggravated with your years: So that it is not owing to your own innocence, but to the Lord's mercy, that you are not conſumed. And, in order to being ſober-minded, you are to think thus ſoberly of yourſelves and your ſtate, with reference to God and his laws; for this is no more than what you ought to think, it being only truth and fact; and ſuch truth, the ſerious conſideration of which, has a very cloſe connection with chriſtian ſobriety of mind; or rather, is compriſed in it.

4. THIS implies a ſerious conſideration of your natural frailty, or mortality; of the many evils to which you are liable in this world; of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of human life, and the certainty of death approaching. Many people, and particularly the young, are apt to entertain fond, romantic conceits about worldly felicity, and to put far away the evil day of death, of adverſity and ſorrow; ſeldom, perhaps, thinking of it at all, and when they do, generally flattering themſelves that this day is at a great diſtance. But if ever you are truly ſober-minded, you will think differently upon this ſubject. You will ſee the vanity of the world and its enjoyments; even of all that is in the world, "the "luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and the "pride of life". You will often have in your thoughts, the bodily pains and diſeaſes, the numerous croſſes and diſappointments, and the many other natural evils, to which mankind are ſubjected in the preſent ſtate; agreeably to the repreſentations of ſcripture, and to the experience of all ages—That the creature,-that mankind are "made ſubject unto vanity". You will not therefore, if you think ſoberly of yourſelves, and the preſent ſtate, depend upon any great, uninterrupted and laſting felicity in this "evil world";

or even upon living long in it. For there are hardly any more obvious truths than theſe: That "man that is born of a woman, is of few days and "full of trouble: He cometh forth as a flower, "and is cut down; he fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, "and continueth not." How frequent are the examples of mortality, even in the young; in the hail and ſtrong, who had the faireſt proſpect of any, of long life? How often have you yourſelves ſeen the words of Job verified? — That "one dieth in his full ſtrength, being wholly at "eaſe and quiet. His breaſts are full of milk, "and his bones are moiſtened with marrow." It is not of ſo great importance for you to know particularly, how mankind originally came into ſuch a ſtate as has been mentioned, as it is to know, and duly to conſider, the certainty of it as a fact. It may therefore ſuffice here, to obſerve to you in general, that the holy ſcriptures ſpeak of this as having been occaſioned by the ſin of our firſt parents, or their apoſtacy from God — But juſt ſentiments concerning human life, mortality and death, conſidered as facts, are doubtleſs a very material branch of that ſobriety, to which young men ſhould be exhorted.

5. A SERIOUS conſideration of the conſequences of death, belongs alſo to this head. Theſe conſequences are moſt important and intereſting in their nature, according to the holy ſcriptures; which repreſent this ſhort life as a ſtate of trial or probation, and that which follows it, as a ſtate of recompence; which is therefore to be either a moſt happy or miſerable one to all men reſpectively,

pectively, according to the deeds done by them "in the body." Tho' your bodies are mortal, your ſouls will ſurvive them: "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment." Now you will not, certainly, deſerve the character of ſober-minded, unleſs you often think ſeriouſly of theſe things;— approaching death, the immortality of your ſouls, the righteous judgment of God, and the unfading, eternal joys, or the unutterable woes, which will be the conſequence of that deciſive judgment.

THERE are many other things neceſſary for the illuſtration of chriſtian ſobriety: Of which in the next diſcourſe. But

I CANNOT conclude, my young brethren, without cautioning you againſt pride, vanity and ſelf-ſufficiency; than which there is nothing more repugnant to true ſobriety. Conſider yourſelves at all times as the degenerate off-ſpring of Adam. Conſider the narrowneſs, weakneſs, and great imperfection of your intellectual faculties; how naturally-dark your minds are, as you come into the world; how little you really know at preſent, how much you are wholly ignorant of, and will be, ſhould you live ever ſo long. Conſider the moral depravation of your minds; your proneneſs to vice; the many ſins and follies which you have been guilty of, from your early childhood; how juſtly you might be condemned by Him, that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; who chargeth even his angels with folly, and in whoſe ſight the heavens are not clean. Conſider the need which you have, both of cleanſing from the filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and of pardon, through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. If you entertain ſuch ſentiments as theſe; if you think thus ſoberly of yourſelves, it will be a good ſtep towards that ſobriety of mind to which you are exhorted. But there will be but litlte ground of hope reſpecting you, if you are vain and proud; if you are puffed up with an high opinion of yourſelves; of your own knowledge, innocence and virtue, or your righteouſneſs in the ſight of God — In ſaying theſe things, you doubtleſs perceive on one hand, that I do not mean to flatter you in any evil or falſe way. You may be equally aſſured on the other hand, that I do not mean to reproach and revile you; but only to repreſent the ſimple truth to you, that you may now acquaint yourſelves with God, and be at peace; ſo that good may come unto you in the end.

LET me alſo, in conformity to what has been ſaid before, caution you againſt thoſe fond and groundleſs conceits about worldly happineſs, particularly in the gratification of your ſenſual luſts and paſſions, which the minds of the young are ſo commonly filled with; while they neglect that pious and virtuous practice, in which alone true felicity is to be found. Such imaginations as thoſe, are mere dreams, or the deluſions of him that is ſaid to be a liar and murderer from the beginning, on account of his tempting our firſt parents with the fair forbidden fruit; telling them that they ſhould not ſurely die by eating of it, but become happy and immortal as gods. The like deluſions he practiſes from age to age with ſucceſs,

ceſs, upon the unexperienced ſons of Adam and Eve; ſo that they alſo flatter themſelves with the hopes of happineſs, by eating "forbidden fruit;" and in doing thoſe things, of which God hath ſaid, that the end of them is death. It would be your wiſdom to take warning by the fate of our common progenitors: And alſo to truſt the experience of thoſe in all ages, who having made the trial, have found that vicious pleaſures are but pain in the end; particularly the experience of that great KING, and PREACHER * to young men, who, after ſo much trial, ſaid: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—"I have ſeen all the works that are "done under the ſun, and behold all is vanity "and vexation of ſpirit." Hear then, my beloved brethren, what the ſame wiſe, great and royal PREACHER calls "the concluſion of the whole matter";— the reſult of all his obſervations, inquiries, reflections and experience— "Fear God, "and keep his commandments; for this is the "whole of man. For God ſhall bring every "work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, "whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

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* SOLOMON.

SERMON III.

Chriſtian Sobriety further explained; *viz.* (4.) Of Repentance. (5.) Of the Faith which is ſaving. (6.) Of an external Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. (7.) Of Prayer. And (8.) Of univerſal Obedience to Chriſt's Commandments.

TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

MY firſt diſcourſe upon this ſubject contained ſuch obſervations as were tho't proper by way of introduction to the main deſign. What that was, has alſo been ſhewn already; and not only ſo, but entered up on in the ſecond and laſt diſcourſe. It will now be proper juſt to remind you, that the FIRST part of that deſign, was, Somewhat diſtinctly to explain to my young brethren, the nature of that ſobriety which is ſpoken of in the text; and to recommend it to them in a curſory way.

In purſuance of which branch of it, divers remarks have already been made upon the nature of ſobriety, conſidered both internally and externally; and more particularly, the three following, *viz*,

1. That it is founded in a firm belief of God's being and perfections, his moral government, and univerſal providence.

2. That it implies a belief of the goſpel of Chriſt, or the Chriſtian revelation. And

3. That it alſo implies, thinking ſoberly of One's ſelf.

These things were as diſtinctly explained as I could well do it, unleſs I had ſpent more time upon them. And, without any further repetition, I ſhall now proceed, by divine permiſſion and aſſiſtance, to ſome other particulars comprehended in *Chriſtian* ſobriety: For as to any other ſobriety, my young brethren, whether real or imaginary, we ſhall now have no concern with it. To proceed, therefore.

IV. This ſobriety ſuppoſes and implies in it, ſincere repentance; ſuch a repentance as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles preached to the world. In the preceeding diſcourſe I mentioned to you, thinking ſoberly of yourſelves, as a neceſſary ingredient in true ſobriety of mind: And that, as was then ſhewn, implies a ſerious conſideration of the darkneſs and depravity of mind which are common to you with the reſt of mankind. It alſo implies a conſideration of your paſt ſins and miſcarriages; and of the ſtate of guilt which you are in, in conſequence of having tranſgreſſed God's commandments. But ſomething beyond this, is implied in repentance. Let me, therefore, ſhew, as briefly as may be, what the holy ſcriptures intend hereby. And,

In general, repentance properly ſignifies a change of ſentiment, of mind and diſpoſition, in conſequence of reflection; an after-wiſdom in One that has been in error and vice; and, in one word, the converſion, i. e. the turning of his heart from ſin and folly to righteouſneſs and wiſdom,—from the power of ſatan unto God. This, in general, is the true ſcriptural idea of repentance; as it is, indeed, explained by theſe ſcripture-expreſſions, "repentance from dead "works", and "repentance towards God". But, more particularly,

1. Repentance implies a ſenſe of having erred from the paths of truth and virtue; or a conviction of the mind and conſcience, that a perſon has done amiſs; that he has done what he ought not to have done, and neglected thoſe things which he was in reaſon bound to do. Some perſons have indeed been much more criminal than others: their deviations from their duty have been more numerous, and their faults of a more heinous nature. But all are in ſome degree culpable. And no perſon ever did, or can repent, without being firſt convinced of his errors.

2. REPENTANCE implies, not only a ſenſe of having done amiſs, but of having therein tranſgreſſed God's commandments, which are holy, juſt and good: Or, in other words, of having ſinned againſt God. Even an atheiſt, continuing ſuch, may be convinced of his having tranſgreſſed the laws of right reaſon, and of juſtice; but he cannot repent; which implies a conviction of the mind thatOne has ſinned againſt God, or tranſgreſſed his laws, conſidered as ſuch; "For ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law" of God.

3. REPENTANCE implies ſhame,and remorſe of conſcience. And this is, indeed, very cloſely connected with a conviction of mind, that One has violated the commandments of the all-wiſe, holy and good God. The penitent ſinner finds himſelf pierced and wounded at the heart; or, in the language of ſcripture, "pricked in the heart", as with a poiſoned arrow, or a deadly dart.

4. IT implies ſelf-condemnation, a ſenſe of ill-deſert, an apprehenſion of God's righteous diſpleaſure, and fear of "the wrath to come." However eaſy or ſecure the ſinner were before, yet when the holy law of God, and his own ſins are at once brought into his view, the very ſight is as it were mortal to him. This is the two-fold ſtate, or rather, theſe are the ſucceſſive ſtates of mind, which the apoſtle Paul repreſents in the emphatical words following: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died."

5. THO' repentance implies remorſe of conſcience, and ſelf-condemnation, it is eſſentially

different from deſpair. True repentance is ever attended with a degree of hope towards God; deſpair implies a fear of wrath void of hope, which is the ſtate of devils. That carries the ſoul to God, as a merciful and gracious being, who delighteth not in the death of ſinners: This drives it from him, and plunges the ſinner into a ſtate of greater guilt and miſery than he was in before. The deſpairing ſinner has, if I may ſo expreſs it, both his eyes fixed on the holy law, or juſtice of God: The true penitent, but one of his; the other being turned on God's mercy, or grace, manifeſted in the goſpel. So that repentance aud faith, tho' often treated of diſtinctly, and tho' really diſtinct in ſome reſpects, mutually infer and imply each other, when we ſpeak of that repentance and faith which are truly evangelical.

6. TRUE repentance implies an ingenuous ſorrow for, and hatred of all ſin in general, as it is moſt unreaſonable in itſelf, and contrary to the holy nature of God; not merely as it expoſes the ſinner to his wrath and curſe.

7. IT is, accordingly, attended with a ſincere and fixed reſolution, by God's grace and help, to forſake all the known ways of vice and folly without exception. If I may ſo expreſs it, repentance cuts "of the right hand," and "plucks out the right eye": It ſevers betwixt the heart and every former luſt, how beloved ſoever; or how ſovereign an empire ſoever it once maintained over the blinded and enſlaved ſoul.

9. THE ſincere penitent is reſolved, not only that he will "ceaſe to do evil", but by God's grace, "learn to do well"; and live in obedience to all his commandments.

It ſhould be farther obſerved,

10. THAT ſuch a repentance as this, which is the gift of God by the miniſtry of the goſpel, under the conduct and influence of his Holy Spirit, conſtitutes that renewed ſtate of mind, which the ſcriptures expreſs by a "new heart", being "born again", the "new creature", the "new man", and the like.

Now true repentance is abſolutely neceſſary in order to true ſobriety of mind. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt preached the neceſſity of it himſelf, ſaying, "Except ye repent, ye ſhall all—periſh." He commanded his apoſtles to do the ſame thro'-out the world, with this addition, that the remiſſion of ſins ſhould be proclaimed at the ſame time in his name. This he did, in the moſt explicit manner, not till after his reſurrection; as in the following words: "Thus it behoved "Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe again the third day: "And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins "ſhould be preached in his name, among all "nations—And ye are witneſſes of theſe things. "And behold I ſend the promiſe of my Father "upon you: but tarry ye—untill ye be endued "with power from on high †." The apoſtles punctually followed his directions in this, as in other reſpects. For immediately after they had received "the promiſe of the Father",—the

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† Luke 24 46—49.

Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven in conformity to his promiſe, on the day of pentecoſt, we find them preaching thus ; "Repent, and "be baptized every one of you in the name of "Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins‡": And again ſoon after, to the ſame purpoſe, thus : "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that "your ſins may be blotted out—"* They did the like wherever they preached, whether to Jews or Gentiles. And accordingly the apoſtle Paul, giving an account of his own doctrine, does it in this comprehenſive manner : "Teſtifying both to the Jews," ſaith he, "and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. §"

CERTAINLY then, you cannot imagine yourſelves ſober-minded, without that repentance which Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles taught thus, as a grand, fundamental part of the religion of ſinful creatures. Be aſſured that, whatever you may believe concerning God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, concerning the common degeneracy of mankind, or any other matter, you will yet be the ſubjects of no ſobriety deſerving the name of Chriſtian, without godly ſorrow for your own ſins reſpectively, and a deep repentance ; ſuch an one, in general, as was briefly deſcribed before ; and particularly ſuch an one, the conſequence of which ſhall be the actual forſaking of every known wicked practice. If you have no other ſobriety of mind, than what will conſiſt with an habitual indulgence of your luſts, this is a ſtrange ſort of ſobriety indeed; ſuch as neither the ſcriptures, nor common ſenſe, knows any thing of. What a ſoleciſm would it be, to ſpeak of a ſober-minded young man, ſtill "walking in the way of his heart, and in the ſight of his eyes;" and reſolved in thoſe wicked courſes, for which God has poſitively declared, he "will bring him into judgment"? You would not, ſurely, think it any commendation of you, to be characteriſed as ſober young men, and then to have your ſobriety explained after this manner: You would immediately and juſtly conclude, that you were reproached in the bitter language of ſarcaſm and irony—And God grant, there may be very few *ſuch* ſober-minded young men amongſt us! Imagine not therefore, you have any ſobriety that is worthy the name, till you have repented of all your ſins in duſt and aſhes; till you find in yourſelves a fixed reſolution to forſake them; till you implore the forgiveneſs of them with truly broken and contrite hearts; till you caſt yourſelves on the grace of God as manifeſted thro' Jeſus Chriſt, saying in the humble ſpirit of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a ſinner!" Nor, in a word, till you internally and truly conſent to that method of ſalvation which the goſpel reveals. Every thing ſhort of this, will leave you deſtitute of chriſtian ſobriety.

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‡ Acts II. 38. * Ch. III. 19. § Ch. XX. 21.

AND this leads me to ſpeak a little more diſtinctly than I have hitherto done, of that faith which the ſcriptures ſpeak of as having the remiſſion of ſins, juſtification and eternal life connected with it. Which faith, tho' it includes, yet certainly intends much more than, what is uſually called a ſpeculative belief of the chriſtian revelation; the neceſſity of which latter, was ſpoken of in the foregoing diſcourſe.

To proceed therefore,

V. CHRISTIAN ſobriety of mind, implies in it that faith, which is often ſpoken of in ſcripture as juſtifying and ſaving. Let me explain this matter to you under the following obſervations: For a thing of ſo great importance ought not to paſſed over with a curſory mention of it.

1. SINFUL men, as ſuch, need a mediator between God and them; a redeemer and ſaviour from ſin and death. God is, indeed, perfect in goodneſs and mercy, even eſſentially, or in his own nature. But according to the repreſentations of ſcripture, it was not conſiſtent with his wiſdom and majeſty, or the dignity of his laws,and the honor of his government; (the due ſupport of which, by the way, is actually for the good and happineſs of the intelligent creation in general) It was not conſiſtent herewith, I ſay, for God to overlook, or to forgive the tranſgreſſions of men, without the intervention of a mediator; who ſhould do and ſuffer what might have a tendency, and be ſufficient to vindicate the honor of his laws, by exciting and preſerving in all, a juſt veneration for his government, at the ſame time that guilty creatures were made partakers of his lenity and grace.

2. THE Son of God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is the one and only perſon, who ſuſtains this character of a mediator betwixt God and ſinners. "For there is one God, and one mediator be-

"tween God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus; "who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time †". He is the "propitiation "for the ſins of the whole world"; having died for all, "the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might "bring us to God".—"Neither is there ſalvation "in any other: For there is none other name "given under heaven among men, whereby we "muſt be ſaved." *

3. THE Lord Jeſus Chriſt was appointed and ordained to this office by God, even the Father, from the original clemency and goodneſs of his nature; by him to manifeſt the riches of his grace to thoſe that were obnoxious to his righteous diſpleaſure, or in a ſtate of ſin, condemnation and death. "For God ſo loved the "world, that he gave his only begotten Son, "that whoſoever believeth on him, ſhould not "periſh, but have everlaſting life. For God ſent not "his ſon into the world to condemn the world, "but that the world thro' him might be ſaved."‡ And, "In this was manifeſted the love of God "towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live "thro' him. Herein is love, not that we loved "God, but that he loved us, and ſent his ſon to "be the propitiation for our ſins." § The mediation of Chriſt, therefore, is the effect, the conſequence of God's love and grace to ſinful men, not the cauſe or ground of it, as it has often been repreſented, not a little to the diſhonor of God's goodneſs, and of his free, rich grace to the children of men.

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† 1 Tim II. 5, 6. * Acts 4. 12. ‡ John III. 16, 17.
§ 1 John 4. 9, 10.

4. God himſelf having appointed his Son to the mediatorial office, there can be no doubt but that he is in all reſpects duly qualified for it: And "able to ſave them unto the uttermoſt, that "come unto God by him." To which end, "it "pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all ful"neſs dwell".

5. The holy ſcriptures frequently ſpeak of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as ſuſtaining a threefold character, or relation to mankind; and as executing three high and important offices in the capacity of a mediator between God and men. He was "a prophet mighty in deed and word, "before God and all the people". He is the high prieſt, the "great high prieſt of our profeſſion": And he reigns as a king; God having "given him all power in heaven and in earth"; or "put all things under his feet, and [particu"larly] given him to be head over all things to "the church."†

6. The revealed method of obtaining the forgiveneſs of ſins, deliverance from wrath, and a title to eternal life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, is moſt uſually expreſſed in the new teſtament by the terms "faith", "believing" on him, "receiving him," and "coming to him."—"That whoſoever *believeth* on him, ſhould not periſh," &c.—"Ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Chriſt Jeſus."—"As many as *received* him, to them gave he power" [the high and glorious privilege] "to become the ſons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name."—"Ye will

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† Eph. I. 22.

not *come unto me*, that ye might have life."— "*Come unto me* all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt." Theſe various expreſſions are undoubtedly ſynonimous, or ſignify in general the ſame thing.

7. THESE expreſſions being compared with other paſſages of ſcripture, and the whole tenor of the new teſtament, can intend nothing ſhort of a ſincere acquieſcence in, or aſſent and conſent of the heart to, that method of ſalvation which is revealed thro' Chriſt: For it is "with the heart "that man believeth unto righteouſneſs". So that the faith which in ſcripture is ſaid to juſtify and ſave, might be defined in the following manner, conformably to the foregoing remarks; *viz.* Faith is the act of a ſelf-condemned, humbled and repenting ſinner, flying to, and caſting himſelf upon the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt; whom he truſts with the concerns of his ſoul, as the only, and every-way ſufficient Saviour of ſinners, provided and appointed by the Father; internally receiving and ſubmitting to him in the *whole* of that character, as he is revealed in the goſpel, *viz.* as a prophet, prieſt and king: Which faith implies in it the new birth, or the renovation of the heart, and is a living, operative principle of love and obedience; never failing, when there is time and opportunity for it, to produce good works, or a virtuous, holy and godly life.— Let me diſtinctly, tho' briefly, explain the ſeveral parts of this definition.

THAT faith which has forgiveneſs, juſtification and ſalvation connected with it, then, is an "act"; the act of the ſoul, or mind. In which reſpect it agrees with believing, aſſenting, or conſenting, in any other caſe whatever: all which are real acts or operations of the mind. Our Saviour himſelf calls believing a "work," in anſwer to that queſtion, "What ſhall we do, that we might work the *works* of God"?—"This is the *work* of God," ſaid he, "*that* YE *believe* "on him, whom he hath ſent."† Moreover,

IT is the act of "a ſelf-condemned, humbled and repenting ſinner." None but ſuch an one can, in the nature of the thing, truly believe in Chriſt as the ſaviour of ſinners, or have any deſire, how much need ſoever he may have, to be ſaved by him. It is, accordingly, thoſe that "labor and are heavy laden" with a ſenſe of ſin, that Chriſt invites to come unto him, or believe on him, ſaying,—"And I will give you reſt." Again,

IT is the act of ſuch a ſinner, "flying to, and caſting himſelf upon the free grace of God." It is implied in his being "ſelf-condemned," &c. that he truſts not in himſelf, or in any innocence or righteouſneſs of his own: So that all his hopes muſt neceſſarily terminate at laſt, on the mere grace and mercy of God. And faith is that act of the ſoul, by which it has recourſe to this mercy, or humbly depends upon the God of all grace, for pardon and ſalvation. But

IT is on the mercy, or free grace of God "in Jeſus Chriſt," that the repenting ſinner thus caſts himſelf by faith. However certain it may be upon principles of reaſon only, that God is a good and merciful being; yet the true believer truſts in his mercy, as it is revealed and manifeſted thro' Chriſt; "coming unto God by him." †

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† John VI. 28, 29.

AGAIN: He caſts himſelf on the grace of God in Chriſt, whom he alſo "truſts with the concerns of his ſoul." Faith implies a ſinner's relying or depending upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as a Redeemer and Saviour. And that, in the next place,

As the "only, and every-way ſufficient Saviour of ſinners." The true, penitent believer does not doubt of Chriſt's being in all reſpects a ſuitable and adequate Saviour of ſinful men: (For to do ſo, is the eſſence of infidelity.) And as the only one, in conformity to the apoſtle's words, "Neither is there ſalvation in any other."

Moreover,

HE truſts in him thus, as the Saviour "provided and appointed by the *Father*." This is implied in what was ſaid before; and ſo needs not to be inſiſted on. Only it ſhould always be remembered, that Chriſt does every thing in the affair of man's ſalvation, in conformity to the ſovereign and gracious pleaſure of God, even the Father— "Who gave himſelf for our ſins," ſays the apoſtle—"according to the will of God and our Father." *

THE penitent believer in Chriſt as a Saviour, does at the ſame time, and thereby, "internally receive and ſubmit to him in the *whole* of that character, as he is revealed in the goſpel." Chriſt, as a Saviour, is not divided, nor are his offices or benefits divided. Neither does chriſtian or ſaving faith reſpect him, conſidered in one of his capacities excluſively of the other; but in all of them in conjunction; as the one undivided mediator, in conformity to the doctrine of the goſpel; *viz.* "As a prophet, prieſt and king." Now, internally to receive and ſubmit to him as a "prophet", is to conſider and regard him as ſuch; to give intire credit to whatſoever he has ſaid, ſo far as it is known; ſincerely to deſire to "learn of him", and to be inſtructed by him in the things which pertain to the kingdom of God. As faith reſpects him in his "prieſtly" office, it means depending upon the mercy of God for pardon and ſalvation through his ſacrifice, atonement, or blood ſhed upon the croſs, and his interceſſion with the Father in conſequence thereof. And faith, as it reſpects him in his regal or "kingly" character, means ſubjection, or dutiful and loyal ſubmiſſion of heart to him, his authority and government; or a ſincere conſent of the mind to be ruled and governed, as well as protected, and finally ſaved by him. Nor did ever any perſon *properly* receive and ſubmit to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or believe on him, in any one of theſe characters, (ſuch is their connection) without doing ſo with reſpect to them all.

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† Heb. 7. 25. * Gal. I. 4.

Again:

SUCH a faith as this, implies or connotes "the new birth", or that "renovation of the "the heart" by the Spirit of God, ſo often ſpoken of in ſcripture. This is evident from a conſideration thereof, as it has now been briefly explained. And the ſame thing is alſo connoted or implied, in the faith ſpoken of in ſcripture as ſaving—“ To them gave “ he power,” ſays St. John, “ to become “ the ſons of God, even to them that *believe* “ on his name: Which were *born,* not of “ blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of “ the will of man, *but of God* †”.—“ Who-“ ſoever *believeth* that Jeſus is the Chriſt” [truly and properly *believeth* it] “ is *born of* “ *God* ‡”.—“ Ye are all the *children* of God “ *by faith* in Chriſt Jeſus. ‖ ”—“ And if chil-“ dren, then heirs,” &c.*

THIS faith is of conſequence, as was ſaid before, “ a living, operative principle of love and obedience; never failing, where there is time and opportunity for it, to produce good works, or a virtuous, holy and godly life. For, “ Whoſoever is born of God, doth not “ commit ſin ”† : But—“ overcometh the “ world; and this is the victory that over-“ cometh the world, even our faith”‡—“ In “ Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth “ any thing, nor uncircumciſion; but *faith* “ that *worketh by love.*”‖—“ Wilt thou know, “ O vain man, that faith without works is “ dead” ?—“ By works was faith made per-“ fect.” * It muſt be particularly obſerved,

however,

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† John I. 12, 13. ‡ John 5. 1. ‖ Gal. 3. 26. * Rom. 8. 17. † 1 John 3. 9. ‡ Chap. 5. 4. ‖ Gal. 5. 6. * See James II. 14.

however, that a ſinner is no ſooner the ſubject of ſuch a faith, than he is actually in a ſtate of pardon, juſtification and ſalvation, whether he lives afterwards to perform good works, or not. If he lives, he certainly will perform them, having ſuch an holy and operative principle in his heart. For it is a contradiction to ſuppoſe, that a perſon who was once a rebel, ſhould at length internally ſubmit himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt as his king, and yet not act as becomes a loyal ſubject of his kingdom, by doing his commandments. But if he has no opportunity for this, by reaſon of death, he is yet equally ſafe, equally juſtified: His faith; the loyalty and obedience of his heart, virtually contain all good works. And, by the way, from this ſcriptural account of the faith which juſtifies and ſaves, appears the great error of thoſe, who ſpeak of juſtification as antecedent to repentance, faith and regeneration; it being manifeſtly ſubſequent, or poſterior thereto, in order and conception, according to the ſcriptures.

Such, my young brethren, is that faith, ſo much ſpoken of in the new teſtament; that faith which is truly juſtifying and ſaving; and without which there is no ſalvation. For he that doth not believe thus, or in the true ſenſe of ſcripture, is "condemned already." No kind or degree of repentance or reformation, intitles any perſon to ſalvation, independently of faith: It is by means of this faith, which indeed includes or ſuppoſes repentance, that ſinners are delivered from condemnation and wrath. This, therefore, is indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to your being ſober-minded in a chriſtian ſenſe. Whoever falls ſhort of this, falls ſhort of chriſtian ſobriety. For ſurely, *that* cannot be a truly chriſtian ſobriety of mind, which leaves a ſinner in a ſtate of guilt and condemnation. Any ſobriety which a perſon may be the ſubject of, and yet periſh in his ſins at laſt, as a deſpiſer or neglecter of the ſalvation revealed thro' Chriſt, is eſſentially defective.

WHATEVER concern then, you may have upon your minds about your paſt ſins; tho' your external practice may be much reformed; and tho' you may be really deſirous of eternal happineſs: (as who is not?) Yet if you do not give the conſent of your hearts to be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, in the way that the goſpel makes known; if you do not ſincerely, penitently and humbly caſt yourſelves on the mercy of God, receiving and ſubmitting to Chriſt as a prophet, prieſt and king; you are not ſober-minded in the full and juſt ſenſe of the text: You are not yet actually in the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt and of God, tho' you may not be far from, but near to it, and in a hopeful way of finally inheriting the bleſſings of it. This is not, however, a ſtate to be reſted in as ſafe or ſecure. If you are burthened with a ſenſe of ſin and guilt, and fear the wrath to come, remember the gracious words, and hearken to the invitation of Him, who once ſaid, and ſtill ſaith, "Come unto me — and I will give "you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and "learn of me — and ye ſhall find reſt unto "your ſouls: †" That is, in other words, Become my true diſciples and followers: believe in me, and ſubmit yourſelves to the laws of my kingdom: Doing which, you will enjoy great peace of mind at preſent, and inherit everlaſting life.

You will obſerve, that what has been ſaid under this head of diſcourſe, relates immediately, not to your external practice, but to that faith which is truly ſaving, and is itſelf the ſubſtance or eſſence of Chriſtian ſobriety internally conſidered; the root and principle of all true holineſs, or Chriſtian obedience.

It is therefore to be obſerved, in the next place, that Chriſtian ſobriety implies in it,

VI. An *external confeſſion* of Chriſt's name, a profeſſion of the religion which bears it, and an explicit dedication of One's ſelf to the ſervice and glory of God in him. No perſon of adult age has any right to be looked upon as a ſober-minded or real Chriſtian, till he has given reaſon for others to think him ſuch, by making a chriſtian profeſſion in conformity to the order of the goſpel, or the commandment

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† Matt. XI. 28, 29.

ment of our Saviour, and the laws of his kingdom. And here,

1. It is required, not only that you believe in Chriſt, but voluntarily, or by an act of your own, take upon yourſelves the character of his diſciples and followers, by "naming his name" in a ſolemn and public manner, or "before men"; thereby viſibly devoting yourſelves to God in him, and laying yourſelves under obligation to conduct yourſelves in other reſpects, as becomes the profeſſed followers of him, who was "holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners." The Lord Jeſus Chriſt not only encourages ſuch a public confeſſion of him, by a gracious promiſe on one hand; but diſcountenances the neglect hereof by a moſt awful threatning on the other. "Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me "before men," ſaith he, "him ſhall the Son "of Man alſo confeſs before the angels of "God. But he that denieth me before men, "ſhall be denied before the angels of God." † In another evangeliſt it is,—"before my "Father which is in heaven." ‡ He ſays, nearly to the ſame purpoſe, elſewhere.—— "Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of "my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be "aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own "glory and his Father's, and of the holy angels." * Theſe are very ſolemn warnings againſt diſowning Chriſt, his name or "his words,"

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† Luke 12. 8, 9. ‡ Matt. 10th Chap. * Luke 9. 26.

words," even in times of ſore trial and perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake; to which times they more particularly refer. But, to be aſhamed of, to diſown or to neglect confeſſing them, when there is nothing of that ſort to be feared, is doubtleſs far more criminal and dangerous. It is manifeſt from the whole current of the new-teſtament, that the faith of the heart is to be accompained with the confeſſion of the tongue; and that as neceſſary to ſalvation, except in extraordinary caſes.
" If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the
" Lord Jeſus," ſays the apoſtle, " and ſhalt be-
" lieve *in thine heart* that God hath raiſed him
" from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For
" with the heart man believeth unto righte-
" ouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is
" made unto ſalvation." * Indeed, ~~if~~ in any who know this to be the will and commandment of Chriſt reſpecting them that believe on him, the contempt or wilful neglect thereof, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with a ſincere regard to him and his authority: It is, in its nature, inconſiſtent with ſuch a faith in him as the ſcripture ſpeaks of as ſaving; which faith reſpects him as truly in his regal, as in his prophetic or ſacerdotal character. But,

2. THO' it is poſitively injoined upon thoſe who believe in Chriſt, to confeſs him before men; yet it is not to be ſuppoſed neceſſary, or the thing intended hereby, that perſons

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* Rom. x. 9, 10.

ſhould ſtand up in the midſt of an aſſembly, and, *vivá voce*, or in expreſs words uttered by themſelves, declare their faith in him. For ſome cannot even *ſpeak* at all, and much leſs in ſuch a public manner. Neither can it be ſuppoſed neceſſary for them to profeſs their repentance, faith and experiences in a long writing, under their hands;—a common practice formerly in this country, but growing daily more and more into diſuſe; and not without ſufficient reaſon, as being attended with divers inconveniences, which need not be particularly mentioned. Therefore,

3. NOTHING more, or farther, can be ſuppoſed neceſſary as to this matter, than that people ſhould, in a ſolemn, public manner, and by ſome ſign, or ſignificant geſture, commonly underſtood, make ſuch a declaration of their faith in Chriſt; ſignifying their conſent to the covenant of grace eſtabliſhed in him, and their reſolution, by the help of God, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs; or to conduct themſelves in all reſpects according to the laws of Chriſt's kingdom. This may be effectually done, without any ſpeaking or writing on their part, in public. And as nothing beyond this can reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be required, by "confeſſing Chriſt "before men"; ſo neither can any thing ſhort of it be ſuppoſed to come up to the thing really intended thereby, in any natural con-

ſtruction of the words, or in conſiſtency with the practice of the chriſtian church from the earlieſt times.

4. UNDER this head, I muſt not omit particularly to mention the chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm, which our Lord inſtituted as the outward, viſible ſign of initiation into his church, or a mark of diſcipleſhip to him; ſaying to his apoſtles, "All power is given "unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye "therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing "them in the name of the Father, and of the "Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt"†. The known practice of the apoſtles afterwards, being compared with this injunction, ſhews that our Lord deſigned *water-baptiſm* therein. For, that they actually baptized with water, is evident from many paſſages in the new-teſtament; not only in the Acts, but Epiſtles of the apoſtles: And doubtleſs they did ſo in obedience to Chriſt's command, which they underſtood much better than the modern deniers of water-baptiſm. Mr. Robert Barclay has deſcended to cavil and trifle upon this ſubject, in a manner much below a perſon of his learning and good ſenſe: Aſſerting that tho' John's baptiſm was by or with water, Chriſt's was to be without water, or meerly an internal and ſpiritual baptiſm. His principal argument to eſtabliſh this doctrine, is grounded on the words of John Baptiſt himſelf: "I

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† Matt. 28. 18, 19.

"indeed baptize you with water unto repen-"tance; but he that cometh after me—ſhall "baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with "fire"†. According to which diſtinction and oppoſition, he inſiſts, that as John's baptiſm was by water without the Spirit, ſo chriſtian baptiſm is ſolely by the Spirit without water: So that there neither is, nor ought to be, any baptiſm under the Goſpel diſpenſation, and in conformity to Chriſt's commandment, beſides that of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghoſt; this being it ſelf, and this alone, chriſtian baptiſm.

To overthrow which ſophiſm, I need remind you only of two paſſages of ſcripture, both in the Acts of the apoſtles. Soon after they themſelves were baptized with the "Holy Ghoſt and with fire"; i. e. received the Spirit, which appeared to them in the form of "cloven tongues, like as of fire"‡; we find them preaching thus to the people: "Re-"pent, and be baptized every one of you, "in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion "of ſins, *and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Ho-"ly Ghoſt*"‖. According to which, the Holy Ghoſt was to be given them in *conſequence* of their being baptized in the name of Chriſt. Therefore receiving chriſtian baptiſm, and receiving the Holy Ghoſt, do not mean preciſely the ſame thing, as it is pretended; one of them being prior to the other, and a means thereof. And what could that be, but water-baptiſm in Chriſt's name, in *conſequence* of which, the perſons baptized were to receive ſpiritual baptiſm, or the Holy Ghoſt?

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† Matt. III. 11. ‡ Acts II. 3. ‖ Ver. 38.

BUT there is another paſſage which ſtill more clearly refutes the learned Barclay's comment upon the above-cited words of John. We are informed that St. Paul "came to Epheſus, and finding certain diſciples, he "ſaid unto them, Have ye received the Holy "Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid, "We have not ſo much as heard whether "there be any Holy Ghoſt. And he ſaid "unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm." Be pleaſed particularly to obſerve what immediately follows, in which there is an expreſs reference to the words of John: "Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with "the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the "people, That they ſhould believe on him "which ſhould come after him, that is, on "Chriſt Jeſus. When they heard this, they "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. *And when Paul had laid his hands on "them, the Holy Ghoſt came upon them* †". Now, could there poſſibly be a plainer diſtinction than this, either, firſt, betwixt John's baptiſm, and baptiſm in Chriſt's name afterwards; or, ſecondly, betwixt theſe perſons being baptized in Chriſt's name, and their receiving the Holy Ghoſt? This was ſubſequent to the other, and not till after Paul had laid his hands on, as well as baptized them. Chriſtian baptiſm then, and receiving the Holy Ghoſt, were not the ſame thing; but the former of them, ordinarily at leaſt, prior to the latter, and an inſtituted means thereof: And what could that be, but water-baptiſm? Whereas, upon Mr. Barclay's principles, it was John's baptiſm only, that was by water; Chriſt's being entirely ſpiritual.

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† Acts xix. 1——6.

UPON the whole then, the plain ſenſe of John's word's, on which ſo much ſtreſs has been laid by the Quakers, may be expreſſed thus—I indeed baptize you with water [only] unto repentance: But Jeſus Chriſt will ſoon inſtitute another baptiſm, which, tho' performed by an external waſhing with water, as mine is, ſhall yet have far more glorious effects. For penitent believers in Chriſt, being baptized in conformity to his inſtitution, ſhall, in conſequence thereof, receive the Holy Ghoſt — There is nothing harſh in this paraphraſe; the difference betwixt John's and Chriſt's baptiſm is ſufficiently preſerved thereby; and there is a neceſſity for ſuch an one, in order to account for the apoſtles baptizing with water, as they certainly did. Let me add, that if this be an inſtituted means of obtaining the Holy Spirit, it may be juſtly feared that thoſe who neglect and deſpiſe it, have ſome what *leſs* of the *Spirit* among them, than they would be tho't to have: Tho' I do not preſume to judge any; for to his own maſter every one ſtandeth or falleth.

YOUR duty then, in this reſpect, is clear: All who believe in Chriſt, not having already been baptized with water, are obliged to be ſo, in obedience to his command. — Tho' as to the far greater part of you, my young brethren of this ſociety; I conclude you were baptized in your infancy: So that you are not to be exhorted to be again baptized. But there are many of you, who have not yet made this as it were your own act, by viſibly taking upon yourſelves the bonds of the chriſtian covenant. And the neglect hereof, in thoſe that are come to adult age, is not very conſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety. Nor can you be tho't to have *yourſelves* confeſſed Chriſt before men, in the manner required by him, by being devoted to him by your *parents* or *others*, in your infancy.

5. THERE is a conſiderable number of thoſe that may be juſtly accounted young men, tho' not unmarried, who, in order to obtain baptiſm for their children, have made a profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt, and ſolemnly bound themſelves to obſerve *all* the laws of his kingdom; and yet turn their backs upon the Lord's table from year to year, as if this were no chriſtian inſtitution;-- as tho' Chriſt had never ſaid, "This do in remembrance "of me"; and as tho' the inſpired apoſtle had not ſaid, "As oft as ye eat of this bread,

"and drink of this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's "death, *till he come.*" It is not very eaſy to reconcile this neglect, with the ſuppoſition of your having been *ſincere* and *in earneſt*, when you engaged to obey all Chriſt's known commandments and inſtitutions;-- upon ſuppoſition that you allow this to be one of them, as you cannot deny it to be. I have often, and very particularly ſhewn what your duty is in this reſpect; tho' with much leſs ſucceſs than was deſired. However, I will not be weary or diſcouraged in reminding you of it; hoping that the time will come, when what is ſeriouſly ſaid to you upon this head, will be as ſeriouſly attended to; and have a proper influence upon your practice: Which will be a better evidence of your being truly ſober-minded, than any that you can well give, while you habitually abſent yourſelves from the fellowſhip of Chriſt's church and people in one of his ordinances.

INDEED, if *unchriſtian* terms of chriſtian communion are inſiſted on in any church or churches, your not being incorporated with them, provided it is ſolely for this reaſon, will not be your fault, but that of the impoſers of ſuch terms. Nor can it be denied, that there has been a great deal of this kind of antichriſtian impoſition and tyranny practiſed in different ages; particularly in reſpect of *creeds*, or *articles* of faith. For, inſtead of being contented with ſuch a ſimple, plain and apoſtolic confeſſion as this, "I believe that *JeſusChriſt is theSon of* GOD" †; or even with a general and ſerious profeſſion of faith in the holy ſcriptures as the word of God; many churches have imperiouſly required an explicit profeſſion of unſcriptural articles of faith, as the pretended "form of ſound words"; tho' almoſt barbarous enough, perhaps, both in expreſſion and ſentiment, at once to wound the ear, affront the ſenſe, and ſhock the humanity of an *Hottentot*!

BUT, ſurely, it is time that all proteſtants, eſpecially proteſtant-diſſenters, ſhould make the holy ſcriptures the ſtandard of a ſound faith and chriſtian practice, in oppoſition to ALL OTHER *forms of ſound words*; as ſome are pleaſed to miſ-call the reveries of poor crazy monks and lunaticks, half-diſtracted ſchoolmen, ſuperannuated enthuſiaſts, and proud, factious, avaritious zealots for a party, pretending to make black white, and white black; and then ſcolding at, and curſing all the world, that would not implicitly believe their unholy ravings, and ſubmit to them as the true, uncorrupted *catholic faith!*— God, in his own time, which is approaching, will put an end to all theſe antichriſtian uſurpations in his church. Chriſt's "fan is in his hand, and he will thoro'ly purge his floor." And happy is it for thoſe who, in the mean while, neither exerciſe ſuch tyranny over others, nor ſuffer under it; at once allowing to all, and enjoying themſelves, that juſt and reaſonable "liberty, wherewith Chriſt has made his diſciples FREE from every ſuch yoke of bondage."

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† Acts VIII. 37.

VII. CHRISTIAN ſobriety implies frequent and fervent prayer to almighty God in the name of Chriſt, for the pardon of ſin, for the Holy Spirit, for light, ſupport, ſanctification, comfort; in a word, for all needed bleſſings, temporal and eternal: Together with devout and grateful praiſes for all bleſſings enjoyed of every kind, to the Father of lights, from whom "every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down." An habitual neglect of prayer, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of chriſtianity. And if ever you are really ſober-minded, you will find in yourſelves an heart, a diſpoſition to pray, and to give thanks to "God and our Father for all "things, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." It will not be a grievous taſk or burden to you, as it is to a ſecure and hardened ſinner. So far from this, that you will find yourſelves uneaſy if you are long without pouring out your hearts before God. You will not only pray to him in public with his people, and in a more private manner, if you have opportunity; but in ſecret. And even when you are engaged in the lawful and neceſſary buſineſs of life, your hearts will frequently be lifted up to God in the heavens, in holy deſires, grateful praiſes, and good reſolutions: Thus, in the language of the apoſtle, "pray-

" ing always with all prayer, and ſupplica-
" tion in the Spirit, watching thereunto
" with perſeverance. " *

I MIGHT mention many other particular duties, as belonging to the head of chriſtian ſobriety; for, indeed, there is no one duty, but what belongs to it. But, inſtead of deſcending to more particulars, I muſt obſerve now in the laſt place,

VIII. THAT chriſtian ſobriety implies living a truly religious, virtuous and holy life, in conformity to the precepts of the goſpel, the laws of Chriſt's kingdom. Our Lord frequently cautioned his diſciples againſt depending upon an external profeſſion of faith and religion, without good works, without obedience to his commandments. " Not
" every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſays he, " ſhall enter into the kingdom of
" heaven; but he that doeth the will of my
" Father who is in heaven. Many will ſay
" unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we
" not propheſied in thy name, and in thy
" name caſt out devils, and in thy name done
" many wonderful works? And then will I
" profeſs unto them, I never knew you: de-
" part from me, ye that work iniquity".† So that, whatever *wonderful* works men may do, yet if they neglect good works, or ſtill work *iniquity*, they are not true diſciples of Chriſt. How many *devils* ſoever they caſt out; yet if they leave *one* to reign in their own hearts, ſo that

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* Eph. VI. 18. † Matt. VII. 21, 22. 23.

that they "do his luſts," they are moſt expreſly excluded from all hopes of eternal life. Indeed, living in the practice of any known ſin, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with true repentance, and that faith which is ſaving, according to the account before given of them. "How ſhall they that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?" Or how ſhall they that are "alive unto God by Jeſus Chriſt," not live to God, or not obey his known will in every reſpect! It is impoſſible: If the tree be good, the fruit will be good; if the heart be renewed and ſanctified, the life will alſo be renewed and holy. The love of God and of man, underſtood in their proper and juſt extent, and conſidered as principles in the heart, the effects of Chriſtian faith thro' the influences of the holy Spirit, do in a ſort comprehend all Chriſtian duties and virtues. Known, wilful and habitual diſobedience to God in any reſpect, is inconſiſtent therewith; inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſincerity, and therefore with ſobriety.

If, therefore, you aſpire to the character of being ſober-minded, "having believed in God, you muſt be careful to maintain good-works:" You muſt keep his commandments in view, endeavouring, by his grace, to glorify him in all things; to form your temper, and whole courſe of life, according to thoſe reaſonable, juſt and good precepts which Chriſt has left his diſciples to walk by; not forgetting his own admirable example of piety, purity and humility; of meekneſs and charity, of temperance and patience; nor al-

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lowing yourſelves in any thing which you know, or in your conſciences believe, is contrary to the will of God. For, as was intimated before, doing ſo, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with integrity and uprightneſs of heart, as well as with that holineſs of life which God has required of all whom he hath favoured with the light of the goſpel, and called to his eternal kingdom and glory by Jeſus Chriſt.

I HAVE now done with the *firſt* general head of diſcourſe propoſed, having ſomewhat diſtinctly explained to you the nature of that ſobriety, to which even " young men" are to be exhorted.

LET me conclude for the preſent, with ſome ſhort reflexions on what has been ſaid upon it.

And, 1. YOU would do well, my young brethren, to apply this to yourſelves reſpectively, in the way of ſerious ſelf-examination. It becomes you to conſider both your paſt and preſent ways; what ſentiments and diſpoſitions are predominant in your hearts; and by what rules and maxims your lives are directed: That ſo you may be able to judge, what your own true characters reſpectively are; whether you are truly religious and virtuous, or ſober-minded, or not. For, as has been obſerved more than once, true religion, and true ſobriety, are not really different; but eſſentially one and the ſame thing.

IT ſhall now be taken for granted, that you do not diſbelieve the being, perfections and providence of God, or the general truth of the chriſtian revelation; and alſo, that you have ſome juſt conceptions of the common frailty and degeneracy of mankind. Neither of theſe things ſhall in the leaſt be called into queſtion—But have you ſincerely repented of your own ſins before God? Have you, in a deep ſenſe of your guilt and unworthineſs, fled for refuge from his juſtice to his grace and mercy, thro' his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and internally conſented to that method of ſalvation which is revealed in the goſpel? Have you alſo confeſſed Chriſt's name before men, in the manner required by him; and viſibly dedicated yourſelves to God in him? Do you live in the frequent practice of ſincere and fervent prayer? And do you conſcientiouſly endeavour to walk according to all Chriſt's known commandments? It would be convenient for you to put ſuch queſtions as theſe to yourſelves, as in the preſence of God, who is greater than your hearts, and knoweth all things.

2. THOSE of you who can truly anſwer theſe queſtions in the affirmative, (as I hope ſome of you can) may aſſure yourſelves that you are indeed ſober-minded; and have great ground of comfort, peace and joy, as being the ſons of God, and heirs of eternal life. I might addreſs and congratulate you in the language of St. John, in his firſt epiſtle:—"I write unto you young men, "becauſe ye have overcome the wicked One." And again, "I have written unto you young "men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of "God abideth in you, and ye have overcome "the wicked One." Happy you, my beloved

brethen,

brethren, who even in youth have, thro' grace, attained to that ſtate and character, which ſo many other perſons, tho' advanced in years, are yet far from! But,

3. Be not high-minded, but fear. A ſober mind, is always an humble one. Boaſt not of your religious attainments, as the ſhameful and hypocritical manner of ſome is: And if you ever glory even in tho't, let it be only in the Lord. "For what haſt thou, that thou didſt not receive?" Be ſenſible of your imperfections; and beware of a relapſe into any ſinful courſes—"The juſt ſhall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him."† There is ſtill ample room in the beſt of you, for improvement; for increaſe of ſobriety, knowledge, ſtrength, and all chriſtian virtues. Endeavour therefore, to make progreſs in the ways of wiſdom and holineſs: For he that ſtands ſtill, inſtead of preſſing forward in the chriſtian race, is on the point of going backward. And it were doubtleſs "better for any not to have known the "way of righteouſneſs, than after they have "known it, to turn from the holy command-"ment delivered unto them."‡

4. As to thoſe of you, my young brethren, who cannot pretend to be ſober-minded according to theſe ſcriptural marks and rules of ſobriety; you have no reaſon to be ſatisfied with your preſent condition, or to think it ſafe. For there is no real ſafety in any ſtate below that of true chriſtianity; or in any thing ſhort of that repentance,

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† Heb. X. 38. ‡ 2 Peter II. 21.

tance, faith, and renewed ſtate of mind, with which eternal life is connected by the promiſes of the goſpel. If you ſhould die ſhort of this, you would die in your ſins; unpardoned, unintereſted in the redemption wrought out by Chriſt: And what the conſequence of this wouldbe, you need not, ſurely, to be now informed! But,

5. LEST I ſhould be miſunderſtood, I muſt tell you, I do not mean hereby, that if you are deficient in any of theſe reſpects, or fall ſhort of ſuch a truly chriſtian ſtate, you are of conſequence deſtitute of every degree of ſobriety that is of any conſideration; and ſo are to be ranked in the ſame claſs with the moſt profligate and abandoned ſinners. God forbid! The holy ſcriptures, in numberleſs places, ſuppoſe a meaſure of knowledge, conviction of ſin, ſeriouſneſs of mind, and deſire to know the will of God and the way of life, antecedent to a ſaving illumination and repentance, faith and regeneration; and yet preparatory thereto; which things, being conſidered in this view, are truly valuable and important. And indeed, they are the effects of God's gracious influences upon the heart; in conformity to what is ſaid of Lydia in the Acts, "That the Lord "*opened her heart to* ATTEND to thoſe things "which were ſpoken by Paul." Our Saviour alſo tells ſuch a ſerious, inquiſitive perſon, that he was "not far from the kingdom of God." Nor do the holy ſcriptures leave us any room to doubt, but that all perſons living under the goſpel, who are ſo far convinced of their ſinful ſtate, and ſo

deſirous of obtaining eternal life, as *ſincerely* and *perſeveringly* to ſeek God's face and favor, ſhall actually attain to a ſaving knowledge of him: If any of you are in ſuch a ſtate of mind as this, there is juſt and great reaſon to hope, that being already near to God's ſpiritual kingdom, you will ere-long be actually tranſlated into, and become the happy ſubjects of it forever. But, as was ſaid before, this is not a ſtate to be reſted in. You may, without all doubt, relapſe into your ſinful courſes after ſuch a partial reformation: In which caſe, "the latter end will be worſe with you than the beginning." It highly concerns you therefore, to beſeech the God of all grace, both "to keep you from falling," and to "give "you repentance to the acknowledging of the "truth;"—the truth as it is in Jeſus; that knowing him, and the only true God in and by him, you may obtain eternal life.

6. If even ſuch thoughtful and ſerious young men as were laſt mentioned, are not yet, however, in a ſtate of ſafety, or at preſent entitled to glory, honor and immortality; how far, alas! are thoſe from being ſo, who do not at all conſider their ways, nor ſo much as make the important inquiry, "What they ſhall do to be ſaved?" —thoſe who live in the allowed gratification of their luſts; and, inſtead of ſeeking after God, if haply they may find him, rather "ſay to the "Almighty, Depart from us; for we deſire not "the knowledge of thy ways!" Alas! my young brethren, if there are any preſent, to whom

this character juſtly belongs; (for I neither particularly know, nor accuſe any;) your condition is truly deplorable. For is it not ſo, to be in a ſtate of enmity againſt God your Creator? againſt Him, in whom you live, move and have your being; Him, from whom you can neither fly, nor effectually hide yourſelves in any ſecret place, not even in the dens and rocks of the mountains, or tho' the rocks and mountains ſhould, at your entreaty, fall on you and cover you;—and againſt whom you can make no reſiſtance; Him, who is at once omnipotent, omnipreſent and omniſcient, as well as infinite in holineſs and righteouſneſs! It is dreadful indeed, to be "enemies to ſuch a Being in your minds, by wicked works!"

BUT leſt the very thought hereof ſhould too much overwhelm you; leſt the "ſpirit ſhould fail before God, and the ſouls which He hath made;"† let me remind you, that God is no leſs good and merciful, than he is holy, great and powerful. He "will not contend forever, neither will he be always wroth:" He is even now waiting to be gracious to you;—to every one that will attend to the voice of love, and turn at his reproof, how numerous ſoever your ſins have been. His mercy is at once higher than the heavens, and lower—"deeper than hell;" as it ſaves thoſe who are deſerving of it! The blood of Jeſus, that hallowed fountain, in which ſo many millions of polluted ſouls have been cleanſed and healed, has not yet loſt its purifying, ſalutary virtue; nor will it do ſo, while there are any ſinners

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† Iſai. LVII. 16.

ners on earth willing to be cleanſed and ſaved by it; nor even after there are none! The Holy Spirit of God is, I doubt not, now ſtriving with your hearts, and, if I may ſo expreſs it, moving upon the face of the chaos, ‡ towards the production of the *new creation* in Chriſt, as it once did at the time of the *old*, to the perfecting thereof. O then, my young brethren, let not this be your condemnation at the great day, That you at once deſpiſed the riches of God's goodneſs, leading you to repentance;—accounted the blood of the covenant wherewith you might have been ſanctified, an unholy thing;—and did deſpite unto the Spirit of grace, by which you would otherwiſe have been ſealed to the day of redemption!

‡ Gen. I. 2.

SERMON IV.

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Of ſome things contrary to Chriſtian Sobriety, viz. (1.) Of taking God's Name in vain. (2.) Of neglecting the public Worſhip. (3.) Of light and irreverent Behaviour at it. (4.) Of exceſſive, riotous Mirth at other Times. (5.) Of ſinful Diverſions or Recreations. (6.) Of exceſſive Expence and Pride in Apparel. (7.) Of the neglect of Buſineſs, and Miſ-ſpence of Time.

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TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

MY young brethren, having, in the firſt diſcourſe, made ſome remarks on the text, introductory to my main deſign; and having, in the ſecond and third, ſomewhat diſtinctly explained to you the nature of that ſobriety which is here ſpoken of, as alſo recommended it to you in a curſory way: I proceed now, by divine aſſiſtance, as was propoſed in the ſecond place, SECONDLY, To point out, particularly, ſome of the many ſins, follies and criminal exceſſes, which are repugnant to chriſtian ſobriety; and againſt which young men eſpecially, may need to be cautioned.

THIS, it is conceived, may, by the bleſſing of God, be very ſerviceable to you, not merely by ſhewing you what you ought not, but what you ought to do; and ſo giving you a ſtill more diſtinct idea of chriſtian ſobriety. For, to every vice that is to be avoided as contrary to this ſobriety, there is an oppoſite virtue or duty, which ought to be practiſed as a branch of it: And, it is well known, that in all caſes in general, contraries ſerve for the illuſtration of each other. So that when you are ſhewn what things you ought to avoid, you will the more clearly diſcern what that manner and courſe of life is, to which you are exhorted: Nor ſhall I fail, as I go along, particularly to remind you of the duties and virtues, to which the ſins that are to be mentioned, ſtand in oppoſition. And if ſome of theſe ſins and exceſſes have been hinted at already in any of the preceeding diſcourſes; yet that will not render a more particular caveat with reſpect to them, ſuperfluous or improper.

LET me farther premiſe, That tho' in the enumeration of theſe ſins and follies, it is rather my intention to give you friendly warning as to the future, than to accuſe, reproach and upbraid you, as to any faults which you may have been guilty of in times paſt; yet it will be highly proper for you to make the application to yourſelves reſpectively, ſo far as you have been really guilty of any of theſe crimes. You ought, with ſhame and ingenuous ſorrow, to acknowledge them to God; humbly imploring the forgivneſs of them thro' Him, who once appeared to put away ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf. For he that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper; but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall find mercy with the Lord; who "is not willing that ANY ſhould "periſh, but that ALL ſhould come to repen-"tance."——Let me begin then,

I. WITH the mention of an heinous ſin more immediately againſt God; I mean that of "taking his name in vain." To uſe the name of the great and holy God irreverently or lightly in common diſcourſe; and more eſpecially to ſwear by it raſhly, falſely, wantonly, or without lawful occaſion; to imprecate the curſe of God, either upon yourſelves or others, whether in jeſt or in earneſt; together with whatever commonly goes under the name of profane language: All theſe things, I ſay, are doubtleſs prohibited in that well known, and yet often violated command of the decalogue, "Thou ſhalt not take "the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And the words immediately following, clearly and ſtrongly expreſs the high diſpleaſure of the Almighty againſt thoſe who break this commandment, together with the certainty and greatneſs of their puniſhment, unleſs it be prevented by deep repentance—"For the Lord will not hold "him guiltleſs, that taketh his name in vain." There are many other paſſages of ſcripture, in which this ſpecies of common and groſs impiety, is ſeverely prohibited and condemned.

"He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear?"† —particularly ſhall he hear and puniſh the profane oaths and curſes, the abominable imprecations of ungodly ſinners! If wicked men are to give an account in the day of judgment, even of "every idle word" that they ſpeak, as our Saviour poſitively declares they ſhall; how much rather ſhall they give an account of ſuch impious, ſuch abominably wicked words, as I am here ſpeaking of! And what religious ſobriety, do you think, can poſſibly be in the mind of that perſon, whether old or young, whoſe mouth is thus filled with curſes, and other profane language?—in the mind of One, who ſcruples not to trifle with that venerable name, at which holy angels bow with love and reverence, and devils themſelves tremble, and are horribly afraid!—in the mind of One, who upon any ſlight diſcontent or uneaſineſs, or perhaps without any ſort of provocation, calls upon the great God to damn either himſelf or another, or the like? Certainly, there can be no true ſobriety in thoſe perſons, whoever they be, that addict themſelves to theſe practices, ſaying perhaps with the wicked of old, "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" The uſe of ſuch language evidently diſcovers the want of all due reverence to the great God, and a mind depraved to a ſad degree, upon any ſuppoſition that can be made. There is no tolerable excuſe for it; nothing that can be ſaid by way of apology for thoſe that are chargeable with it, but what will much more effectually ſhew their great guilt and impiety. For example:

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† Pſalm XCIV. 9.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that they really mean *nothing*, when they lightly uſe the name of God, and imprecate the vengeance of heaven upon themſelves, which is the moſt favourable ſuppoſition; yet does it not diſcover a total abſence of reverence to God, and of all ſerious concern about his favor, his bleſſing or his curſe, when people can often uſe his name without thinking of Him, and ſpeak of his curſe, or of damnation itſelf, without meaning any thing thereby! What? have the name of God frequently in their mouths, and yet not have "God himſelf in all their thoughts!"—often ſpeak of his bleſſing and curſe, of heaven and hell; and yet not think of them, or mean any thing thereby! What a totally irreligious?—what a "reprobate," undiſcerning, blinded, and monſtrouſly depraved mind does this imply? How near is it to right down Atheiſm? But it will perhaps be ſaid, that tho' ſome perſons do really think of God, of his wrath and curſe, when they ſpeak of them; yet they are only *in jeſt*, when they uſe ſuch language, and intend not as they ſay. What? jeſt with the holy and venerable name of the great God! and ſpeak of his bleſſing and curſe, of heaven and hell, for merriment and diverſion! Is not this to make the matter ſtill worſe? Would it not, of the two, be leſs criminal to have no deſign at all, than ſuch a one as this? Doubtleſs it would. But you will ſay, perhaps, that they uſe ſuch language, becauſe it is by ſome reckoned *faſhionable* and *polite*; and to avoid the imputation of being *preciſe*, *notional* and *whimſical*. Be it ſo. The time has indeed been, tho' I hope it is not the caſe at this day, when thoſe who ſcrupled to curſe and ſwear profanely, were ſtigmatized as *puritans* and *fanaticks*; the enemies of *the church* at leaſt, if not of the *ſtate*!—But how does this help the matter? What? trifle with the moſt ſacred and awful things, profane the name of God, and break his commandments, for the ſake of being thought polite and faſhionable! or for fear of being thought preciſe; that is, in other words, being thought to fear God and his diſpleaſure! For this muſt be the true and only meaning of preciſeneſs, in the preſent caſe. And what a monſtrous pitch of impiety muſt that man be arrived at, who is aſhamed and afraid of being thought to fear God and his wrath? and who will break his known commandments, profane his holy name, and trifle with the moſt ſacred things, to convince ſome [ſuppoſed] polite and faſhionable people, that he does not fear him!—Is not this worſe and worſe? Without doubt. What then, ſhall next be ſaid by way of apology for profane ſwearers?—that they are in *earneſt*, and really wiſh God would damn them or others, when they imprecate his vengeance? It were needleſs to ſay any thing to ſhew their madneſs and impiety upon this ſuppoſition: Which are as great as any that the devils themſelves are guilty of!

THIS practice is no leſs irrational, or contrary to the light of nature, than it is to the revealed will, and expreſs law of God. And it is one of thoſe enormous ſins, againſt which young men need to be particularly warned. It is not, indeed, a crime that is peculiar to them. Some perſons that are advanced in years, are notoriouſly guilty of it: Yea, it is ſaid, there are *certain creatures* both old and young, appearing in female apparel (for I will not proſtitute the reſpectable name of *women*, by giving it to them) who are no ordinary proficients in this kind of impiety! But whoever are, or are not addicted to it, You, my young brethren, muſt either wholly refrain from it, or elſe renounce all pretenſions to ſobriety, and confeſs that you have no love or reverence for, no fear of God before your eyes. The moſt untutor'd ſavage in the woods of America, might with as much reaſon, and as good a grace, aſſume to himſelf the character of a refined politician, or a ſhrewd philoſopher, as any profane ſwearer and blaſphemer could pretend to be religious, or ſober-minded. The fear of the Lord is the very "beginning of wiſdom:" And if *that* finds any place in your hearts, you will have a ſacred veneration even for his name, as well as for Him: You will never mention it, or ſpeak or think of the great GOD, but in a ſober and reverent manner. It will be as impoſſible for you, either in jeſt or earneſt, either for no end at all, or to pleaſe fools and madmen, to ſwear lightly by the name of God, or to call upon him to damn yourſelves or others, as to lay violent hands upon yourſelves. And yet how common a thing is it to hear both old and young, and even children in the ſtreets, who can hardly ſtammer out an oath or a curſe, uſing this kind of language? All of them without exception, hereby making it manifeſt, that they neither fear God nor regard man, however *well-bred* they may conceit themſelves; and are deſtitute of the firſt principles, not only of grace and ſobriety, but of decorum and good manners: For this practice is an affront to every reaſonable and virtuous man, as well as an heinous, aggravated offence againſt Almighty God.

II. ANOTHER ſin, againſt which you are to be cautioned, is, neglecting the *public worſhip* of God upon the "Lord's day;" either ſtaying at home in idleneſs, or unneceſſarily employing yourſelves in worldly affairs, when you ought to be with the people of God; joining with them in praiſing and praying to him, or in hearing his word read and preached, for your inſtruction and edification in the things pertaining to his kingdom, and to your eternal good.

YOU know, doubtleſs, that as early as the time of Moſes, i. e. above three thouſand years ago, God appropriated one day in ſeven to be obſerved as an holy ſabbath to himſelf, or a day of reſt from common ſecular buſineſs, and to be ſpent in religious exerciſes: Saying, "Remember the ſab-
" bath-day to keep it holy. Six days ſhalt thou
" labor, and do all thy work: But the ſeventh
" day is the ſabbath of the Lord thy God, &c."†

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† Exod. XX. 8.---11. N. B. Notwithſtanding what is ſaid in Gen. II. 3. concerning God's "bleſſing the ſeventh day and ſanctifying it;" and notwithſtanding public ſocial worſhip is in itſelf a moſt reaſonable thing; yet it does not appear from ſcripture, that any ſabbath was *actually* inſtituted by God, or any particular ſet time held ſacred for that purpoſe by good men, before the ~~law was given by~~ Moſes.

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It ſeemed not improper to remind you of this original inſtitution of a ſabbath: Tho' I muſt acknowledge, that I think chriſtians have no concern with *the ſabbath*, moſt properly ſo called, (I mean the Moſaic or Jewiſh ſabbath) any more than they have with circumciſion, the paſſover, and other ſacrifices, &c. All theſe things were but "a ſhadow of good things to come." And when Chriſt the body, the ſubſtance came;—when his church, moſt properly ſo called, in diſtinction from the Jewiſh, was eſtabliſhed, thoſe things ceaſed: At leaſt, the Gentile converts were under no obligation to obſerve any one of them; no, not even the moral law, conſidered merely as a part of the law of Moſes. For if they had, they would have been alſo bound to obſerve all the others for the ſame reaſon. So that if Gentile Chriſtians are obliged to any of the things which were enjoined in the law of Moſes, as they doubtleſs are; yet they are only thoſe, that are either of moral and eternal obligation, or elſe adopted, and taken into "the law of Chriſt," and conſidered as a part of his inſtitution. The Moſaic, or *ſeventh-day ſabbath*, is neither of theſe. If it were, properly ſpeaking, of moral obligation, it would be ſo to all nations in all ages; univerſally and perpetually binding, ſo that the law relating thereto, could no more be either *repealed* or *changed*, than thoſe commandments which require us to love God and our neighbour. And there are few, if any perſons, who pretend to ſay, that Chriſt or his apoſtles ever enjoined Chriſtians to obſerve the ſeventh-day ſabbath inſtituted by Moſes; making that part of the decalogue, a part of the Chriſtian rule of life. Neither is there, according to the goſpel of Chriſt, any other ſabbath, or day, to be obſevred with a Judaical rigor and ſeverity; with which the more liberal, ingenuous and filial ſpirit of chriſtianity, very little agrees. And whoever at this day, pretends to maintain the obligation to regard *any ſeventh day* as a ſabbath, either upon the footing of the law of nature, or that of Moſes, will have a diſgraceful overthrow, or a very contemptible opponent.

Upon what footing then, you will aſk me, do I aſſert an obligation to obſerve "the Lord's day," or "the firſt day of the week," in a religious manner? I anſwer, intirely upon a Chriſtian baſis; upon a footing quite diſtinct from that on which the Jewiſh ſabbath was inſtituted and obſerved. Let me briefly explain this matter.

It is in general conſonant to the light and law of nature, that God ſhould be worſhipped, &c. in a ſocial, public manner. And if ſo, it is convenient and neceſſary, that ſome particular *times*, and even *places*, ſhould be more eſpecially appropriated to that uſe, or end. For otherwiſe, people would not know *when* or *where* to go, in order to meet with others to join with them in theſe offices of religion. It evidently appears alſo from the new teſtament, to have been the will of Chriſt and of God, not only that ſocial worſhip ſhould be upheld under the goſpel diſpenſation, but more particularly, that "the firſt day of the week," on which our

Saviour aroſe, and was "declared to be the Son of God with power," ſhould be *religiouſly*, *gratefully* and *joyfully* obſerved, in praiſe, prayer, &c. For this day is divers times mentioned in the new teſtament, as the day on which Chriſtians aſſembled together in a more eſpecial manner, in the firſt age, for religious purpoſes.†

It muſt be remembered alſo, that the primitive chriſtians came together thus on the firſt day of the week, under the immediate eye, countenance and direction of the inſpired apoſtles; who uſed to meet and pray with, teach, exhort and preach to them, thereon: At which time alſo the Lord's Supper uſed to be celebrated. So we read particularly, [Acts XX. 7.] "And upon the firſt "day of the week, when the diſciples came together "to break bread, Paul preached unto them, &c."

This example of the firſt Chriſtians, conſidering all circumſtances, and particularly their meeting on this day, under the immediate inſpection of, and with the inſpired apoſtles, is ſufficient to give that day the *preference* to any other, for the purpoſes aforeſaid: Eſpecially when we conſider it as the day of that grand and important event, the very baſis of the Chriſtian religion, Chriſt's reſurrection; from whence it is called "the Lord's day." Public, ſocial worſhip being a duty, and ſome particular time being needful to be fixed on for that end; here are poſitive reaſons for the firſt day, rather than another: And no man can pretend any particular reaſon againſt this, or object againſt it; except upon the footing of the antiquated Jewiſh ſabbath, with which we have no

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† Compare John XX. 1. Acts XX. 7. 1 Cor. XVI. 2. & Rev. 1. 10.

no concern—But this is only *example*, you will ſay; not *precept*. Now, inſtead of inſiſting upon it, as I think One might do with great reaſon, that this example, all circumſtances being conſidered, ought to have the force of a command with us; I obſerve,

THAT the words of the apoſtle [Heb. X. 23, 24 & 25,] can be conſidered as nothing ſhort of a poſitive precept, to the purpoſe aforeſaid. "Let "us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without "wavering——And let us conſider one another "to provoke unto love, and to good works: *Not* "*forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together,* "*as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting one* "*another*"—Now, theſe words ought, in all reaſon, to be underſtood and interpreted in conformity to the known general practice of the Chriſtian church in that age; which was to *aſſemble* for the exerciſes of religion on "the firſt day of the week" more eſpecially, tho' not excluſively. So that in any natural and fair conſtruction of this paſſage, the apoſtle muſt be conſidered, (1.) As giving his intire approbation of this general uſage among Chriſtians; as one way in which they were to "hold faſt their profeſſion," to excite one another "to love, and to good works," &c. (2.) As ſolemnly warning Chriſtians againſt neglecting to meet together for the ſaid purpoſes on the firſt, or Lord's day—"Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together." And (3.) As blaming and reproving certain of the looſer, and leſs ſincere profeſſors of chriſtianity, who even in that age abſented themſelves

ſelves from theſe aſſemblies of the faithful—"as the manner of ſome is"—This is no forced or laboured, but an eaſy and natural conſtruction of the apoſtle's words. So that this practice, ſo reaſonable in itſelf, and conducive to many important ends, civil and temporal, as well as religious and eternal, wants neither apoſtolic example nor precept for its ſupport; and even to bind it upon the conſciences of all who acknowledge ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt.

WHY then ſhould any as it were turn Jews, or become "Moſes's diſciples," for the ſake of eſtabliſhing an illiberal, Moſaic ſabbath, to be obſerved with an unſcriptural, Jewiſh, and even Phariſaical rigor, altogether aliene from the genius of the goſpel; inſtead of contenting themſelves with "the Lord's day," to be obſerved with grateful praiſes, with religious joy and feſtivity, as that day was obſerved by the body of Chriſtians for two or three centuries at leaſt? What need is there for having recourſe to Moſes and his law, for the divine inſtitution of any ſabbath that Chriſt's diſciples ought to obſerve! Tho', by the way, "the Lord's day" is not properly called *the ſabbath.* It is never called ſo in ſcripture; and giving it that name ſince, has been the unhappy occaſion of filling many people's heads with Jewiſh and antichriſtian notions about it—

BUT not to digreſs: It being plainly the will of Chriſt and of God, that the Lord's day ſhould be obſerved, as has been ſhewn, entirely upon the plan of the goſpel; it will be an heinous ſin in you, if you neglect the public worſhip thereon;

ſpending that time in idleneſs, in unneceſſary worldly labors, or in diverſions, which you ought to ſpend in the exerciſes of religion with the people of God. If you do thus, you will not in any meaſure deſerve the character of being ſober-minded. Forſake not therefore, the aſſembling of yourſelves with them on this day, as the manner of ſome, I might ſay, of many is. For even in this town, where the Lord's day is, perhaps, as generally and regularly obſerved as in any other place without exception, it is ſuppoſed by ſome, that at leaſt a fourth or fifth part of the people, tho' they can hardly look out at their windows or doors without ſeeing one or more places of public worſhip, are yet hardly ſeen in them twice a year. And yet poſſibly theſe very perſons may be ſo ſtrangely deluded as to think themſelves Chriſtians! Let me tell you, my young brethren, that whatever wrong and ſuperſtitious notions ſome may entertain about a particular *ſabbath* under the goſpel; yet a due obſervation of the *Lord's day,* is a moſt material branch of chriſtian ſobriety. The neglect of it is of pernicious conſequence in many reſpects; as is ſeen in ſome parts even of New-England, where, by this means, the people are but little better than ſavages. The due obſervance, or the neglect of the Lord's day, will probably have a very extenſive influence, good or bad, upon your whole temper, and general converſation. And it is evident from long experience and obſervation, that thoſe perſons who are remarkably negligent of this branch of chriſtian ſobriety, are generally very defective in all others: The exceptions are very few, if any.† But,

III. It is not only a common and unneceſſary neglect of the public worſhip, that is inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety: All *light and indecent*

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† The Sabbatismos, ſabbatiſm or "reſt," which is ſaid to "remain to the people of God," Heb. IV. 9. means not any particular day to be obſerved by Chriſtians as a ſabbath, in diſtinction from other days; but in general, an holy reſt from ſin, and rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, as "the end of the law for righteouſneſs;" and more eſpecially, that future reſt from all pain and ſorrow, which is promiſed to the faithful in the kingdom of heaven. And *ſabbaths* are particularly mentioned, Col. II. 16, 17. amongſt other Judaical and ceremonial things, which were only a "ſhadow" of the better things to come by Chriſt; and to be then diſcontinued—"Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in "drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, "or of Sabbaths: which are a ſhadow of things to come; "but the body is of Chriſt." The ſame apoſtle, Gal. IV. reminding Chriſtians that they were redeemed from the law, that they might "receive the adoption of ſons," ver. 5. and ver. 7. Says, "Thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon"—And he then upbraids the Judaizers and Sabbatizers in the following words: "How turn ye again to the weak and "beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be bro't "into bondage. Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, "and years. I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon "you labor in vain:" Ver. 9, 10, 11. If a man will obſerve any *ſabbath* upon the plan of the Moſaic law, or with a Jewiſh, ſervile rigor, I inſiſt on it, that he ought, upon his own principles, to be *circumciſed* alſo, and "to keep "that whole law."——As far as I am acquainted with the learned Mr. Calvin's ſentiments reſpecting "the Lord's day," my own are very nearly the ſame with his: Except that I cannot go ſo far as that learned man is ſaid to have done, in countenancing *recreations* thereon—And I am far from thinking it unreaſonable, or any hardſhip, if, in Chriſtian countries, the civil authority interpoſes to prohibit people from ſuch worldly labors and diverſions on the Lord's day, *as would be an interruption to the devotions, or religious exerciſes of others.*

decent behaviour in the houſe of God, when you come to worſhip before him, is ſo likewiſe.—Barely attending, or being preſent at, the public worſhip, however conſtant you may be therein, is no certain evidence of religion, or ſobriety. What ſignifies a merely bodily preſence without the heart? You are to glorify God, not only in your bodies, but alſo, and more eſpecially in your ſpirits, which are his. "For God is a Spirit, and "they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in "ſpirit and in truth." There is no more ſobriety in coming to the place of public worſhip on the Lord's day, independently of the views and deſigns which you have in it, than there is in going to an ale-houſe or opera. People may have either reaſonable and good, or fooliſh and wicked deſigns in coming to the public worſhip; and may, accordingly, be either well or ill-employed while they are at it. If they come with an intention to do honor to God, to pray to and praiſe him, to be inſtructed in the knowledge of his holy will and the way of life, with a ſincere deſire to walk therein; and if they accordingly give their attention to theſe things while they are in the houſe of God, there is no doubt but their intention is good and laudable; and thus far they are ſober-minded. But what if it ſhould be pride or vanity, that brings them to the place of worſhip;—that they may ſhew an agreeable perſon and air, or a faſhionable ſuit of cloaths? What if it ſhould be, the "luſt of uncleanneſs;"—that they may indulge the rovings of looſe deſire in a promiſcuous aſſembly? What if it ſhould be, right down impiety;—that they may divert themſelves with the ſerioufneſs of others, and ſecretly make a mock at the ſacred word of God, read or preached? Would perſons be the more ſober-minded, for coming to the place of worſhip with ſuch views as theſe! They are all of them ſuppoſeable. In the firſt-mentioned caſe, it is plain, they come not to worſhip God, but to be worſhipped themſelves. In the ſecond, they come not to pay a pure and ſpiritual homage to the holy One of Iſrael, but an impure and carnal one to *Venus* and her train. In the third, it is manifeſtly, not to ſerve God, but the devil by diſhonouring Him. And what worſe things than theſe, could a young man do at an ale-houſe or an opera! He might poſſibly be much more innocently employed at either of them, even on the Lord's day.

Now, the beſt interpreter of your views in coming to the public worſhip, will be your external behaviour thereat; I mean the beſt interpreter hereof to men: For God is greater than your hearts, and knoweth all things, even your "thoughts afar off." If you ſhould come into the houſe of God with a light and careleſs, or a vain and oſtentatious air: If you ſhould often come very unſeaſonably, when great part of the public worſhip is over; and, by your indecent noiſe and bluſtering, as if you aimed to have the eyes of the aſſembly turned upon you, interrupt the devotion of others: If you ſhould make it your practice to ſtare idly or laſciviouſly about you, to laugh, or the like: If you ſhould do thus, I ſay, inſtead of coming ſeaſonably, and in a decent manner; inſtead of behaving with gravity, joining with apparent devotion in prayer and praiſe to God, and giving a becoming attention to his word read or preached; what evidence would this be of your ſobriety? Would it not rather be a proof of the vanity, levity and impiety of your hearts, than of a ſober-mind?—an evidence, that you had no ſenſe of religion, and of the important ends of public worſhip? So far would ſuch a behaviour, in coming to, and while at the public worſhip, be from a proof of your ſobriety, that it would be a clear evidence of the contrary. And, in this caſe, you might juſtly apply to yourſelves with ſhame, thoſe words in the Proverbs of Solomon—"I was almoſt in all "evil in the midſt of the congregation and aſ-"ſembly." † Which words the wiſe man introduces, as part of the ſuppoſed confeſſion of a fooliſh young One, in the deepeſt anguiſh of ſoul;—One, who had "hated inſtruction, and "his heart diſpiſed reproof; who had not obey-"ed the voice of his teachers, nor inclined his "ear to them that inſtructed him:" As in the verſes immediately preceeding.

LET me therefore, my young brethren, warn you againſt ſuch an unſeemly, ſuch a criminal behaviour at the public worſhip; leſt your coming there, when conſidered in all its circumſtances, inſtead of being the leaſt evidence of the ſobriety, ſhould be a full and inconteſtable one of the vanity, great depravity and impiety of your minds. If you aſpire to the character of being ſober-minded, you are to attend the public worſhip conſtantly, unleſs neceſſarily detained from it; to come to, and behave yourſelves at it, with a decent gravity. And, let me add, that you are to obſerve the like decorum in going from it, inſtead of leaving the houſe of God with laughter and merriment, as if you were going from a comedy, or a looſe play, inſtead of a prayer, a ſermon, and the worſhip of your Creator. This I the rather mention, becauſe it is notorious that ſome young men in the town, tho' I do not ſay, of this Society, often go from the public worſhip in ſuch a rude, and almoſt riotous manner, as is quite ſhocking, not only to people of real ſobriety, but to all that have any ſenſe of decorum. And how muſt that behaviour appear in the eyes of the holy God, which is ſo juſtly offenſive, not only to them that truly fear him, but to all perſons that have the leaſt ſenſe of decency, or propriety of behaviour?—that which would hardly be conſiſtent with decency, in the open ſtreets, at any other time!

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† Chap. V. 14.

IV. I MAY here naturally take occaſion to caution you againſt *exceſſive*, *extravagant* and *riotous mirth* in general. For it is certain that there is ſuch a thing as *this*, which both proceeds from, and tends to evil; and is cenſured as criminal in the word of God. Chriſtian ſobriety ſtands in oppoſition to all ſuch fooliſh and outrageous mirth. Not that chearfulneſs and laughing are, in all caſes, inconſiſtent with true ſobriety; far from it. Solomon obſerves that there is "a time to laugh," as well as "a time to weep;" which he would not certainly have ſaid, if laughing and chearfulneſs had been criminal. For there is no "time for" *lying*, for *profane* ſwearing, or for any thing that is immoral in its nature. It is far from being a duty for any, and particularly for young men, to appear always with a grave face, a gloomy, ſorrowful or dejected countenance. I have a very contemptuous opinion of this face-religion; tho' it ſeems to be almoſt the only religion of ſome people. We know how much of it the Scribes and Phariſees had of old; and our Saviour ſpeaks of it as one inſtance of their hypocriſy, that they "disfigured their faces;" or affected to make a grave and devout appearance, while their hearts were full of pride, covetouſneſs and malice. The Jeſuits, and other religious orders of the church of Rome at this day, are alſo abundantly ſtock'd with this ſort of religion: And yet we have no reaſon to entertain a very high opinion of their piety, or the ſanctity of their manners. And, in whomſoever an uniform gravity of countenance is affected, it is a much ſurer mark of cunning, knaviſh deſigns, and impoſture, or at beſt of folly, than it is of religion or wiſdom. It is doing violence to nature, without any good end: For man has been defined "a riſible animal," with as much juſtice and preciſion, perhaps, as "a reaſonable one." And I cannot but think it very comely and agreeable, as it is far moſt natural for people, eſpecially the young, to be gay and chearful; provided only, that it is not at unſeaſonable times, or beyond the bounds of a decent moderation. Yea, it anſwers very valuable ends with relation to bodily health, and in divers other reſpects.

But yet, my young brethren, as was ſaid before, there is certainly ſuch a thing as unſeaſonable, extravagant and ſinful mirth. For you cannot ſuppoſe that the wiſe man had no meaning, when he cenſured himſelf for indulging to mirth in the following words: "I ſaid in mine "heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; "therefore enjoy pleaſure: And behold, this al"ſo is vanity. I ſaid of laughter it is mad, and "of mirth, what doeth it?† And again:—"The "heart of fools is in the houſe of mirth. It is "better to hear the rebuke of the wiſe man, "than for a man to hear the ſong of fools. For "as the crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is "the laughter of the fool: this alſo is vanity."‡ In conformity hereto, a Greater and Wiſer than Solomon has ſaid, "Wo unto you that laugh "now; for ye ſhall weep and lament."§ It would doubtleſs be trifling, to preſcribe particular times and limits, or to give *formal rules* for mirth and laughter; and, in a ſermon, this might, perhaps, provoke them both very unſeaſonably. It is, however, certain in general, that this natural, comely and uſeful paſſion, ought to be under the reſtraint of reaſon, as well as the other paſſions; and, that ſobriety of mind implies ſuch reſtraint. I know of no better general direction relative to this matter, than this;—to remember that you are "reaſonable," as well as "riſible creatures;" and to have an habitual ſenſe of God's preſence with you at all times, and of moral, religious obligations. This may be a ſufficient, and perhaps the beſt guide and ſecurity, againſt all unbecoming levity of mind, all unſeaſonable and exceſſive mirth.

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† Eccleſ. II. 1, 2. ‡ Ch. VII. 4, 5, 6. § Luke VI. 25.

LET me, however, juſt remind you of one negative rule relating to this matter, which is implied in the general one above. And that is, that you are never to indulge your own mirth, or to provoke that of others, by ſinging profane, looſe, immoral or obſcene ſongs; nor even willingly to hear them. For even "the rebuke of the wiſe, is better than the ſong of fools." And, "Is any merry," ſays the apoſtle, "let him ſing pſalms." It would, indeed, be a piece of weakneſs and ſuperſtition to ſuppoſe, that this which St. James recommends, is the *only* way in which mirth and joy can be innocently indulged. But yet it gives me a fair opportunity to recommend to you the learning of pſalmody, that agreeable and uſeful art: Which might not only be the means of our carrying on this part of public worſhip in the moſt decent and edifying manner; but prove a delightful entertainment to you in private, and a means to prevent your ſpending ſome of your hours in ſuch mirth, as can hardly be accounted innocent—The tranſition from hence to diverſions and amuſements, of which the young of both ſexes are ſo fond, will not be unnatural. Wherefore,

V. IF you would deſerve the character of being ſober-minded, you are to refrain from all *ſin-*

ful diverſions, or *recreations*. For chriſtian ſobriety doubtleſs ſtands in oppoſition to every thing that *properly* falls under this head.

BUT, leſt you ſhould think me unreaſonably auſtere, I will plainly own to you, what is indeed implied in the manner of expreſſion juſt now uſed, —"ſinful diverſions,"—that every thing is *not* ſinful, which goes under the name of *diverſions*. Neither reaſon, nor the law of God, abſolutely forbids every thing of this ſort. Nay, I will go further: The preſent frail, and imperfect condition of human nature, which will not, cannot ſubmit to an uninterrupted application to labor, or to grave, ſerious and weighty matters, ſeems to require ſome relief, ſome relaxations of this kind. And certainly, if they are lawful or innocent in any perſons, they are ſo in the young, who need them moſt. I am therefore far from thinking, a young man ought to be ſuperciliouſly condemned for being ſometimes at a concert of muſic, or a dance. It may be added, that perſons of a ſtudious, recluſe, or any ſedentary way of life, almoſt univerſally need, once in a while, to take ſome ſort of bodily exerciſe, not merely as a relaxation to the mind, but for health. For, in this ſenſe, "bodily exerciſe profiteth" much, how little ſoever it may profit in any other. If people can, at the ſame time, promote this valuable end, and innocently amuſe, relax and unbend their minds, ſo as to return with new ſpirits and vigor to their ſtated buſineſs, there is neither law, goſpel nor reaſon againſt it. And it is a maxim, that thoſe exerciſes of the body, with which the mind is in ſome meaſure gratified, uſually contribute moſt to the recovery and preſervation of health. In which view, riding, dancing, hunting, fiſhing, and divers other manly exerciſes, according to peoples different taſtes, have been often recommended by the ableſt phyſicians, and found ſalutary by the experience of many perſons. †

HAVING

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† The author hopes that the conceſſions which he has made above, relative to diverſions, will not be offenſive to any ſerious and judicious chriſtian, who duly conſiders the preſent ſtate of human nature; eſpecially after reading the reſtrictions in the following paragraphs. If One were to aſk, Whether it was criminal for boys of 6, 8 or 10 years old, to whip a *top*, to play *marbles*, or the like? Whether it would anſwer any valuable ends to keep them wholly from theſe paſtimes, and oblige them to apply themſelves conſtantly to their books? Or whether it is ſuppoſeable, that prophets and apoſtles ſhould be commiſſioned to prohibit theſe ſports of children?——Every one would, probably, anſwer in the negative; and confeſs that this would be the readieſt way to make children dunces inſtead of ſcholars, by giving them a diſtaſte to their learning, and breaking their ſpirits, if it did not ruin their health alſo. The caſe is, in a degree, the ſame, not only with young men and women, but even with thoſe who are more advanced in years, unleſs they are of a very ſaturnine, heavy, melancholly or ſuperſtitious make. Even the Old, generally need ſome kind of relaxations. But, to keep the young wholly from diverſions under religious pretences, is quite irrational; and the direct courſe to make them *irreligious*, by giving them a diſtaſte to all religion, as a ſour, gloomy and moroſe thing. And ſome well-meaning men have probably much diſſerved the intereſt of religion, by their too great rigor and ſeverity in this reſpect.

IT may be farther obſerved as to *dancing* in particular, (tho' the author himſelf had never any taſte for it) That the wiſeſt and beſt heathen moraliſts recommended it, not only as an healthy, but a kind of ſacred and religious exerciſe. But it is countenanced by a far greater authority than theirs; —that of the holy ſcriptures. The royal pſalmiſt calls upon "the

Having made theſe conceſſions, at once as large as you can reaſonably deſire, and no larger than ought to be made by thoſe, who will neither "ſpeak wickedly for God," nor be wiſer than his word: You muſt now allow me, on the other hand, ſolemnly to warn you againſt what is really criminal, relative to the point in hand, and therefore inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety.

In the firſt place, then, there are ſome diverſions which are criminal in their very *nature*; and of the moſt pernicious tendency. Such, I think, ought to be accounted

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the children of Zion to praiſe the Lord's "name in the dance—with the timbrel and harp." [Pſ. cxlix. 2, 3. and cl. 4.] And Solomon ſays, There is "a time to dance." [Eccleſ. iii. 4.] How then did Chriſtians come to have a more gloomy, auſtere religion than Jews! Did they learn it from Chriſt's being at "Cana of Galilee?"—or from his inſpired apoſtles? Neither. And the zeal of ſome Chriſtians againſt dancing in general, is the more remarkable, becauſe this is one of the joyous images, under which the Spirit of prophecy has repreſented the glory and happineſs of the Messiah's kingdom; and this even *mixt dancing*. [Jer. xxxi. 13.] "Then ſhall the virgin rejoice in the dance, "both young men and old together. For I will turn their "mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make "them rejoice from their ſorrow." [See Luke xv. 25.]—How much wiſer are ſome of our modern ſages and reformers, than either David or Solomon, or ——! Superſtition, tho' appearing under the larve and diſguiſe of religion, is in fact one of its worſt enemies, by making it appear ſour and unamiable. And we very frequently ſee, both how much occaſion there was for certain admonitions, and how little ſome regard them—"Be not righteous over much"—[Eccl. vii. 16.]—"Every word of God is pure—Add thou not unto his words, leſt he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." [Prov. xxx. 5, 6.]

ted all ſorts of gaming for money, or other things of conſiderable value. Gaming is not a lawful and honeſt way, either of getting gain, or of loſing One's ſubſtance. This is, in too many reſpects to be now mentioned, a practice fruitful of evil; and therefore to be ſhunned by all chriſtians as one of the greateſt vices. Laying wagers is nearly, if not altogether as criminal. Neither is any kind of diverſion to be thought innocent, in which cruelty is exerciſed towards the animal creation, for no other end than to afford a ſavage entertainment to the authors, or the ſpectators of it. Amphitheatrical ſhews and entertainments, even when no gladiators appeared to fight, either with one another, or with wild beaſts,† but only beaſts with beaſts, were therefore condemned with great reaſon by Chriſtians, from the earlieſt times. Theſe, and ſome other diverſions that might be mentioned, are doubtleſs ſinful in their nature; of a very bad moral tendency, and contrary even to humanity, as well as to the genius of the goſpel. To theſe I may particularly add, the frequenting looſe, immoral and profane plays; ſuch as the greater part of thoſe, perhaps, are, which have been acted upon the ſtage, even in chriſtian countries. There are doubtleſs ſome which deſerve a different character; and which might be heard, or ſeen, not only innocently, but profitably, in any country where the laws did not forbid it. But wherever, almoſt, plays and theatrical entertainments are publicly allowed, the abuſe is ſo groſs, and the effects ſo pernicious in many reſpects, that I cannot but take ſo fair an opportunity to teſtify my joy, that the government has interpoſed to prohibit them here; being perſwaded that the allowance of them, eſpecially in this infant ſtate of the country, would occaſion much evil, and very little, if any good. Moreover;

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† Some have ſuppoſed that the apoſtle Paul, where he ſpeaks of his having, "after the manner of men, *fought with beaſts* "at Epheſus," 1 Cor. xv. refers to his having been expoſed to them by his perſecu[redacted] tors in an Amphitheatre, as the heathen uſed to expoſe their ſlaves and captives, for diverſion; but was miraculouſly delivered. He ſpeaks alſo, 2 Tim. iv. 17. of his having been "delivered out of the "mouth of the lion." But this lion, and thoſe beaſts, were probably only *human* ones.

As to all ſuch diverſions and recreations as may be juſtly accounted innocent in their nature; it is to be remembered, as was hinted before, that even theſe may become criminal by the *abuſe*, in divers ways. The following reſtrictions, cautions and regulations may be helpful to you in avoiding ſuch abuſes, and criminal exceſſes.

The firſt is, that the *company* with which you frequent theſe entertainments, conſiſts in general at leaſt, of perſons of a decent deportment; ſuch as avoid every thing in ſpeech and behaviour on theſe occaſions, which is juſtly offenſive to piety and virtue. For otherwiſe you cannot ſafely, or even innocently, ly aſſociate yourſelves with them, without ſome more urgent call than that of amuſement. Tho' you ſhould be innocent yourſelves, you will be in great danger of contracting defilement and guilt, by frequenting vicious company——" Evil communication, ſays the apoſtle, " corrupts good manners :" And Solomon ; " He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe ; but a *companion of fools* ſhall be deſtroyed."

ANOTHER neceſſary reſtriction is, that you do not frequent theſe diverſions *too often*, or ſpend too great a proportion of your time in them. You are not to let them interfere, either with the duties of religion, or with the weighty and neceſſary buſineſs of common life. However innocent any amuſement may be in itſelf ; yet you are to remember, it is but an *amuſement* ; and therefore ought to give way to *buſineſs*, unleſs when your application to *this*, has already been ſo intenſe or long, that nature requires relief.

AGAIN : You ought not to attend diverſions at *unſeaſonable* hours ; ſo as to be late abſent from home at night, to the interruption of that good, religious order, which ought to be kept up in chriſtian families ; or ſo as to indiſpoſe you for buſineſs the following day. The principal end of recreations, according to the proper ſignification of the word, is to *renew*, to *revive*, to *refreſh* One after fatigue either of body or mind ; and thereby to prepare him for a renewed application to buſineſs. It is therefore a great abuſe thereof, when they diſqualify for buſineſs, inſtead of being a preparation for it.

LET me add another caution. You ſhould not ſuffer the *love* of any diverſions to *reign*, to be *predominant* in your hearts; or to engroſs your thoughts and affections, to the excluſion of thoſe things that are truly noble and important in their nature. To have the heart and affections ſtrongly attached to amuſements or diverſions, ſo as to think chiefly of them, and to be impatient for their return, is a mark of great levity, and a frivolous turn of mind, even tho' One ſhould not tranſgreſs any of the foregoing rules by reaſon hereof; which yet is hardly a ſuppoſeable caſe. Nor is this merely a weakneſs, but a ſin: For it implies an abſence of the grand concerns of life and godlineſs from the thoughts; and ſhews the heart to be immoderately ſet upon mere trifles. If you ought to take heed, as certainly you ought, that your affections are not immoderately ſet even upon the lawful buſineſs, gains and occupations of this life, in oppoſition to thoſe things that are above, the high concerns of religion and eternity; much more ought you to take heed, that they are not thus ſet upon mere diverſions and paſtimes; the occaſion for which, you are to remember, ariſes from the *imperfection* of human nature, ſometimes calling for them as a little relaxation from grave and momentous affairs. Nor ſhould you forget, even in your recreations, that you are in the preſence of the omniſcient and holy God. Neither ſhould you allow yourſelves in any kinds or degrees of them, which render the thought of *ſuch a preſence* uneaſy and terrifying to you: For, to you at leaſt, thoſe which do ſo, are ſinful. That which you cannot do, conſidering yourſelves as in God's preſence, without fearing his diſpleaſure for it, is certainly criminal in you, whatever it might be in other perſons.

If you would be ſober-minded, my young brethren, you are to obſerve theſe, or the like reſtrictions and regulations reſpecting your diverſions: And I ſhould have particularly ſubjoined one more, relative to them, had it not fallen naturally under, what ſeems to be of conſequence enough to make a diſtinct head of diſcourſe, as follows; *viz.*

VI. PRIDE, and *extravagant expence* in *apparel*, or the external adorning of your perſons. This is an heinous ſin, very frequently, and moſt ſolemnly cenſured in the word of God. It is a ſin againſt which, not only young women, but young men, are to be particularly warned, as inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety — It were well if ſome even of the aged of both ſexes, did not need the like caution—It is, indeed, far from being a virtue in any, particularly in young men, to appear in rags, in an uncleanly or ſlovenly dreſs, if it is in their power to appear otherwiſe, in clean and becoming apparel, eſpecially in public. And if this is not in their power, it is a neceſſity to be pitied, not a virtue to be commended. It may be added, that not only the cuſtom of all civilized nations in all ages, but the holy ſcriptures themſelves, warrant ſome diſtinction of dreſs in perſons, anſwerable to the difference in their ſtations and circumſtances in life. There ſeems to be a propriety in this; and ſome valuable ends are doubtleſs anſwered hereby, conſidering the ſtate and temper of mankind, and our connexions in civil ſociety.

But it is the great unhappineſs and ſin of many young people, that their hearts are ſet on gay and coſtly apparel, as if this were a matter of mighty conſequence. And many of them, inſtead of being content with ſuch cloathing as is ſuitable to their degree and circumſtances, to their own or their parents worldly eſtate, aſpire after what is far beyond either; often to the great prejudice of their too indulgent parents, and to their own real intereſt: I might add, to the hurt of their credit alſo. For their reputation ſuffers hereby in the opinion of all wiſe and diſcrete perſons, who are acquainted with them and their circumſtances. And yet, when they have thus expoſed themſelves by the gaiety and coſtlineſs of their cloathing, wholly diſproportionate to their rank and circumſtances; they are often ſtill farther unhappy, and the more worthy of deriſion, by being proud of it; making a ſort of merit of their folly and vanity; and treating with contempt, their equals, perhaps their ſuperiours, whoſe apparel is more modeſt and decent. By this means thoſe good ends which might otherwiſe be anſwered in ſociety, by the diſtinctions of dreſs, are in a great meaſure defeated; for this confounds all ranks, deſtroys due ſubordination, and even inverts the natural order of things, by ſetting poor people of low degree above the rich, and thoſe that are of high; i. e. ſo far as mere pride, and ſumptuous cloathing, can do it. And beſides; how many people have, chiefly by this very means, been reduced to want and beggary? — a very congruous puniſhment, which the wiſe Author of nature and of order has ordained for thoſe, who ſo vainly and wickedly attempt to confound and invert them! All who know any thing of the world, and particularly of this town and country, know that this is a juſt repreſentation of facts; not at all heightened or exaggerated. I do not mean, that all young men are juſtly chargeable with this ſin and folly, but that it is a very common one amongſt us. And all who know any thing of the holy ſcriptures, know that extravagant expence, and pride in the article of dreſs, are often forbidden, and ſeverely condemned in thoſe ſacred oracles. Yea, the light of nature, or common ſenſe, eaſily diſcerns theſe to be egregious follies and vices.

I MUST therefore warn you againſt theſe things, my young brethren, as quite inconſiſtent with gravity and chriſtian ſobriety. They are not to be countenanced even in the *other ſex*; for the peculiar caſt of whoſe minds, ſome may poſſibly think, a little allowance ſhould be made: Much leſs ought they to be countenanced in *ours*, whoſe thoughts and cares ought, certainly, to be employed about matters of far greater importance, than the beauty or richneſs of our apparel, and making a gay external appearance, to catch the eyes of idle, empty ſtarers; and to diſguſt thoſe of the knowing obſerver. In a word, ſobriety and foppery are incompatible with each other.

ALL the young would do well to remember the fatal *garden* and the *fig-leaves*; the ſad occaſion, upon which the uſe of cloathing was firſt introduced into this apoſtate world. Innocence would have wanted no covering for ſhame and diſhonor. If you conſider this, you will not pride yourſelves in any kind of apparel, however gay or ſumptuous, unleſs you are of ſuch a frivolous and depraved turn of mind, as to glory in your ſhame. For your cloathing, as it is the conſequence, is alſo a natural memento, of your firſt parents fall, guilt and diſhonor; and, in ſome ſenſe, of your own alſo.

IF you are in any degree ſober-minded, there is another kind of cloathing which will ſo far engroſs your thoughts and cares, as to leave but little room for any about the quality of your external dreſs. I mean that, of which Job ſays, "I put on righteouſneſs, and it "cloathed me: My judgment was as a robe "and a diadem." The ſame, of which our Saviour ſpeaks under the name of "a wedding garment"; for the want of which, ſo many perſons, and ſome of thoſe of the higheſt rank, even thoſe that are in kings courts, and of royal dignity, will hereafter be excluded from "the marriage ſupper of the Lamb," tho' at preſent "cloathed in ſoft raiment"— That which our Saviour again ſpeaks of, in his meſſage from heaven to the church of Laodicea, ſaying — "Thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and "increaſed in goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art "wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and "blind, and *naked*. I counſel thee to buy of "me gold tried in the fire — and white raiment, that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do "not appear"— That with which the ſpouſe of Chriſt, his true church, is adorned: Of whom it is ſaid, that "to her was granted "that ſhe ſhould be arayed in fine linen, clean "and white; for the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints"—And, Bleſſed is he "that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, "leſt he walk naked, and men ſee his ſhame"!

UNDER theſe metaphors and ſimilitudes the ſacred writers, and our Lord himſelf, repreſents that faith and ſubſtantial piety, that virtue, holineſs and good works, which the goſpel enjoins upon its profeſſors; and all which are comprehended in being ſober-minded. To be cloathed with theſe, to be adorned with this righteouſneſs,is to have the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, "the righteouſneſs of God "by faith." This is a garment which, unchanged, will ſerve for all ſeaſons of the year, and for every climate. It will neither be worn out nor impaired in beauty, by uſe and time; but become the firmer, the more ſplendid and beautiful. It will endure all weathers, winds, rains and ſtorms, without fading; even eternity will but increaſe its luſtre. And though, perhaps, it may not entitle you to what is called *good company*,—the company of the great-little, rich-poor men of this world; yet you need not eſteem it the leſs on that account: For it will be the means of your gaining admiſſion hereafter into the kingdom of heaven; into the fellowſhip of juſt men made perfect; of the noble army of martyrs; of the innumerable company of angels; of Jeſus the mediator of the new-covenant, and of God the judge of all; whoſe "face you ſhall behold in righteouſ-"neſs"! To deſire to be cloathed with ſuch a robe as this, and to wear ſuch a diadem, is a truly great and reaſonable ambition. And when you are poſſeſſed of it, yea, whenever you ſincerely deſire it, one of your leaſt concerns will be, "what you ſhall put on," or "wherewithal you ſhall be cloathed," in any other reſpect.

VII. Another ſin, againſt which you are to be particularly warned, is *idleneſs*, the neglect of *buſineſs*, or *miſ-ſpence* of *time*; all which come nearly to the ſame thing. Time is indeed precious, if eternity itſelf is of any importance! It ought to be ſpent in ſuch a manner, as will turn to good account; that is, in a reaſonable, pious and virtuous manner: And none of it ought to be ſpent otherwiſe, or thrown away. I do not mean, that people are obliged to be always either at their devotions, or their labors, the *buſineſs* of life. Some time is requiſite for taking food, for reſt, ſleep, converſation, and even for recreation and amuſement, conſidering the preſent imperfect ſtate of human nature; as has before been obſerved. And the time ſo ſpent, under proper reſtrictions, is far from being thrown away or loſt: It is ſpent according to nature, reaſon and religion. But the article of ſleep being excepted, which alone requires more than a quarter part of our time in general, a ſmall proportion of it may well ſuffice for all the others together, for people that are in health; except, perhaps, for children. And whatever time is ſpent in any of theſe ways, beyond a reaſonable, due proportion, be that what it will, is at the beſt thrown away and loſt: perhaps much worſe. It is morally impoſſible for any perſon to neglect the proper duties of life, or to live long in idleneſs, without falling into ſuch practices as are poſitively criminal: For the idle perſon is not only peculiarly expoſed to the ſnares and ſeductions of the "wicked One;" but does, as it were, tempt the devil to tempt *him.*

AND conſidering at once, what real calls there are for labor on one hand, the general averſion to it on the other, and the pernicious conſequences of idleneſs, both with reſpect to civil life and religion: Conſidering theſe things, I ſay, it is not without the higheſt reaſon, that the holy ſcriptures abound with ſtrict prohibitions of idleneſs, and many poſitive injunctions of diligence. The fatal conſequences of ſloth, both with regard to the preſent and future life, are alſo repreſented in the ſtrongeſt colors, in the ſacred oracles. Yea, the experience of all ages, has afforded ſenſible demonſtration of the ill effects of this vice. A lazy, ſlothful courſe of life, is not only abſolutely inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety, as being itſelf ſinful in an high degree; but it naturally, and almoſt neceſſarily leads to many other vices,as was intimated before. There are very few perſons, if any, that can live a conſiderable time together in a ſtate of *inactivity*, as ſerpents, bears, and ſome other animals are ſaid to do in their holes and dens, for many months of the year in cold climates. A man, particularly a young man in the ſpring, the warmth and higheſt vigor of life, will ordinarily be *doing ſomething*, either innocent and good, or bad and criminal, except when he is aſleep. And he that neither ſerves God, nor his generation according to the will of

God, in ſome honeſt and laudable way, will of courſe ſerve the devil and his luſts, and be much leſs a bleſſing than a curſe to the world, and to himſelf.

How many young men have ſome of us known, the ſad examples of this truth!—young men whoſe ruin, to all human appearance, both as to this world and the next, took its riſe from idleneſs, and the diſuſe of any lawful calling: Sometimes thro' the criminal and cruel neglect of their parents to put them in any way of buſineſs, and to excite them to diligence therein; and often thro' their own native love of idleneſs and pleaſures, and their averſion to any kind of ſteady application to buſineſs. Would to God, I could myſelf call to mind no very ſtriking and melancholy inſtances of this ſort! And if you, my young brethren, know of any ſuch, it will be your wiſdom to take warning by them.

But when an idle life is ſpoken of as repugnant to a ſober one, and induſtry as an important branch of that ſobriety which young men ought to practiſe; it is not meant hereby, that they are all obliged to what is commonly called hard labor; or to employ themſelves in mechanical arts or huſbandry, in merchandize or navigation. No: There are many ingenuous, laudable arts and employments, tending to the ornament and uſe of human life, which come under neither of theſe heads. A juſt and neceſſary war, alſo furniſhes employment for many; and it is truly an honourable employment to fight for the defence of One's King and country, for laws and liberty, whether in the field or upon the mighty waters. There are alſo many civil offices,in the exerciſe of,or at leaſt in the preparation for which, young men may be worthily engaged. There are alſo thoſe three, which are commonly called the learned profeſſions, * in the exerciſe of which, or in acquiring the needful qualifications for them, young men may be laudably employed‡. Any of theſe referred to, are lawful employments; and all that are ſo, tho' not equally honourable, may yet be accounted ſo in ſome meaſure; and, of conſequence, thoſe perſons who faithfully and worthily diſcharge them,are worthy of honor in their reſpective ſtations ; in conformity to the apoſtolic injunction, " HONOR ALL MEN. "

BESIDES : There are ſome perſons, whom God has bleſſed at once with riches, and with large,ſagacious and contemplative minds, who may both very worthily as to themſelves, and uſefully to the world, devote the greater part of their time to ſtudy, to making obſervations on, and diſcoveries in, the word and works of God, and communicating their diſcoveries to mankind ; inſtead of applying themſelves to any other buſineſs. To ſuch men as theſe, the world has been, and is, greatly indebted ; and the glory of God, at the

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* Law, Phyſic and Divinity.

‡ N. B. All under 25 or 26 years are conſidered as "young men," in theſe diſcourſes.

the ſame time, is eminently promoted by them. What more honourable or uſeful employment can there well be, than this?

Now, all that is intended, when the great ſin of idleneſs, and the neceſſity of a virtuous diligence are inſiſted on, is, that young men are indiſpenſably bound to be diligent in ſome one or more of theſe honeſt and laudable ways; having ſomething habitually in view, which they conſider, and to which they give their attention, as a *buſineſs*; and in which they accordingly employ the greater part of their time. Without this, I think, no young man can well deſerve the character of being ſober-minded: Since, if he lives an idle life, in oppoſition hereto, he is in ſuch a courſe of life as is unreaſonable in itſelf; ſuch an one as the holy ſcriptures have moſt expreſsly and repeatedly forbidden; ſuch an one as expoſes him to many great and peculiar temptations; ſuch an one as it is almoſt impoſſible to continue long in, without falling into ſome of thoſe practices, which are ſtill more apparently immoral and wicked; ſuch an one as will probably be pernicious to thoſe about him, ruinous to himſelf in this world, and terminate in his deſtruction in the other.

In a word then, my young brethren, take heed how you employ your TIME. It is at once fleeting, precarious, precious; and even of infinite importance to you, if that ETERNITY is ſo, which depends upon the uſe you make of it!

SERMON V.

Of ſome other Things contrary to Sobriety; *viz.* (8.) Of a diſreſpectful Behaviour to Superiors. (9.) Of Falſehood and Lying. (10.) Of raſh and immoderate Anger. (11.) Of Envy. (12.) Of Intemperance in Eating and Drinking. (13.) Of Uncleanneſs. (14.) Of Fraud and Injuſtice. (15.) Of Covetouſneſs. And (16.) Of Enthuſiaſm.

TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

IN the foregoing diſcourſe I mentioned to you ſeveral ſins and exceſſes, againſt which young men need to be particularly warned, as inconſiſtent with that ſobriety to which they are to be exhorted. In doing this it was my deſign, not merely to ſhew you what you ought to avoid, as contrary to chriſtian ſobriety; but alſo poſitively, what manner of life you ought to lead, as agreeable thereto: And, at the ſame time, in a curſory manner, to diſſwade you from the one, and excite you to the other. There are many more vices, follies and criminal exceſſes, my beloved young brethren, againſt which you may need to be cautioned; conſidering the depravity of your hearts, and the many ſnares and temptations of this evil world. I ſhall accordingly, by God's leave and aſſiſtance, proceed to ſpeak of ſome others of them in this diſcourſe, with the ſame view;—not to accuſe, but to warn and adviſe you. And may He, from whom all light, and true wiſdom are derived, cauſe you to profit by theſe friendly inſtructions!—The next ſin, againſt which I would particularly caution you, is,

VIII. A DISRESPECTFUL or *contemptuous behaviour* towards your *ſuperiors*, whether in age or in office. Refuſing, or even neglecting to give honor to thoſe, to whom it belongs, is an heinous offence againſt the laws of God, and againſt ſociety, as well as againſt the particular perſons, to whom the diſreſpect is ſhewn. And ſuch refuſal, or neglect, generally, tho' not always, proceeds from great pride of heart. Sometimes it may be owing to mere ignorance, or inadvertence; in which caſe it is much more eaſily excuſed by all, than when formally deſigned; for then it is juſtly conſidered as the effect of envy, pride and inſolence. But it can hardly be accounted quite innocent, even when it proceeds from inadvertence only: Becauſe all the members of ſociety in general, ought to know and conſider what is due from them to others; and therefore the giving honor to whom honor is due, and fear to whom fear, is the ſubject of a chriſtian precept.

SOME perſons have, indeed, made a ſtrange pretence of religion and conſcience for declining the uſe of moſt of thoſe external geſtures, motions, &c. which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed as marks of reſpect, civility or good manners; ſcrupling to bend their bodies, to uncover their heads, or the like, even in the preſence of their king: Tho' the great patriarch Abraham, the father of the faithful, ſtood up, and bowed himſelf even to the children of Heth.† On the ſame pretence they decline giving the cuſtomary titles, expreſſive of civil regard and honor, ſuch as Sir, Maſter, and the like; fearing that this alſo would be a kind of idolatry. Theſe are at beſt groundleſs and ſuperſtitious conceits, tho' there is doubtleſs a medium to be obſerved as to things of this ſort; for there is hardly any thing, however innocent in its nature, in which there may not be a fooliſh, or even criminal exceſs. But in general it is, doubtleſs, not a ſin but a duty, to ſhew regard to thoſe to whom it is due, in all thoſe ways which the different cuſtoms of nations have eſtabliſhed as external marks and ſigns of a civil reſpect; provided only, that they are not in their nature evil. To refuſe to give thoſe tokens of reſpect, which are thus eſtabliſhed, if innocent in themſelves, is actually contrary to the true ſpirit of the apoſtolic precept before mentioned, concerning giving honor to thoſe to whom it is due. For this giving of honor, cannot be thought to refer

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† Gen. XXIII. 7.

intirely to an inward eſteem or veneration, of which there are no viſible tokens or ſigns; but muſt be ſuppoſed to comprehend the cuſtomary external proofs and manifeſtations of ſuch a regard; only under the reſtrictions hinted at above. And let me add, that wiſe and good men in former ages, to ſpeak in the moſt moderate terms, were never ſo whimſical and ſuperſtitious as to think what is now commonly called decency and good manners amongſt men, offenſive to God. It is plain that they conformed to all the innocent civil cuſtoms in general, eſtabliſhed in the countries where they lived; and particularly to thoſe, the neglect of which might have juſtly been conſtrued into pride, ſourneſs, an undue contempt of, or diſreſpect to thoſe, with whom they had any intercourſe. Not to ſhew courteſy to our equals, and much more, to decline giving due honor to our ſuperiors in ſuch ways as theſe, may be juſtly accounted an immoral thing, a violation of God's commandments.

All other circumſtances being alike, age has doubtleſs a right to expect regard and deference from youth. This is agreeable to that order which the Author of nature has eſtabliſhed. It is alſo required in the word of God, that the young ſhould honor the aged. And there is one command to this purpoſe, expreſſed in ſuch a manner as is worthy of a very particular attention: "Thou ſhalt riſe up before the *hoary head*, and "honor the face of the *old man*, and *fear thy* "*God.*"† A diſreſpectful treatment of the aged, is repreſented in ſcripture as no light or trivial miſdemeanour, but an heinous ſin in the young; more eſpecially if the aged, whom they treat with contempt, are alſo good men, the ſervants of the moſt high God. For "the hoary head is [moſt "eminently] a crown of glory, if it be found in "the way of righteouſneſs."‡ And all the young would do well to remember the curſe of God, which befell thoſe children who, in contempt and deriſion, formerly ſaid to the venerable man of God, "Go up thou bald-head, Go up thou "bald-head."§

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† Levit. XIX. 32.

If then, you would deſerve the character of being ſober-minded, or rather, if you would actually be ſo, you are not to treat your ſuperiors in age with contempt or neglect; but to pay all due honor to them: And eſpecially thoſe, to whom you owe honor and ſubjection on account of the particular relation which they bear to you, as well as on account of their years. For in this caſe, there is a two-fold obligation lying upon you to regard and honor them; and the neglect hereof will be proportionably criminal.

And here, in the firſt place, I would particularly remind you of the honor which you owe to your natural parents, your fathers and mothers; and which is due to them by ſuch a double bond and obligation, as was referred to above. It will be highly criminal in you to deſpiſe them, to treat them with any kind of mockery or diſreſpect, tho' you ſhould diſcover ſome weakneſſes and infirmities, or even vices in them; a ſuppoſition which, however, I do not make without reluctance. You would do well to remember the

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‡ Prov. XVI. 31. § 2 Kings II. 23, 24.

the ſtory and the ſin of Châm, who, inſtead of dutifully concealing his father's ſhame and diſgrace, as he lay expoſed in his tent, went and blabbed it to his brethren, that they alſo might be witneſſes to his diſhonor. An high crime indeed, which brought the curſe of God upon his poſterity. A contrary behaviour in his brethren, brought a bleſſing upon them and theirs.‡ You ſhould alſo conſider that ſolemn warning in the book of Proverbs: "The eye that mocketh "his father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, "the young ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, "and the young eagles ſhall eat it."§

THE apoſtle, ſpeaking to the young, of their duty to their parents, reminds them of that ancient and well-known command, "Honor thy father and mother;" particularly reminding them at the ſame time, that this is "the firſt commandment with promiſe:" referring to the gracious promiſe implied in the words immediately following—"that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It is indeed well worthy of obſervation, that this is the *only* commandment in the decalogue, to which any promiſe at all is annexed.

YOUNG men, eſpecially ſuch as are ſtill under the immediate care and government of their parents, are indiſpenſably obliged to pay them, not only an external reſpect and reverence, but to hearken to their counſels, and to "obey them in the Lord;" i. e. in all things lawful, and agreeable to the Lord's will. And as to thoſe of you, my young brethren, who are not ſtill under the immediate eye and government of your parents, but are gone from them, and have families of your own; you will always be under a natural and religious obligation to treat them with great reſpect, deference and honor: And, let me add, to take care of, and to provide for them in their age, if there ſhould be occaſion for it on their part, and ability on yours. Which is certainly no more than a proper return to thoſe, who brought you up with ſo much tenderneſs, coſt and care; and to whom, probably, under God, you are chiefly indebted for whatever worldly poſſeſſions and proſperity you enjoy.

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‡ Gen. Ch. IX. § Ch. XXX. 17.

But you are to honor your other ſuperiors in age and ſtation, as well as your parents; or tho' you have none of the latter. Some of you may have guardians, who are inſtead of parents to you; and to whom, in divers reſpects, a ſimilar regard is due from you. Others of you may be ſervants, apprentices to tradeſmen, merchants, &c. And you are bound to reſpect and obey them in that relation. Some of you may be ſo young, as not yet to have left the ſchools; but to be "under tutors and governors," and inſtructors in various branches of uſeful literature. On which ſuppoſition, you are in reaſon and duty bound to reſpect and honor them; to hearken to their counſels, to obey them and their orders in things relative to their office: And to do otherwiſe will be highly diſpleaſing to God. I ſhall ſay nothing here particularly, reſpecting your duty to religious inſtructors, the miniſters of the goſpel, who are over you in the Lord, admoniſh you, and watch for your ſouls as they that muſt give an account: Thinking that, after what has been ſaid relative to perſons in other ſtations, what is due to *them*, may be ſafely referred to your own ingenuity, your unbiaſſed judgment and conſciences. Indeed, it ever appeared to me both a vain and arrogant thing, for the miniſters of the goſpel to think of "magnifying their office," and gaining eſteem, by crying up the dignity of it; and demanding reſpect and homage, "as the manner of ſome is:" Eſpecially if, at the ſame time, they rather diſgrace their office by a behaviour unworthy of it, than honor it themſelves, by a faithful diſcharge of the important duties of it. And, by what I have read and obſerved, I believe it very ſeldom happens that any miniſter, who magnifies his office only by acting worthy of it, wants that regard which juſtly belongs to him; except, perhaps, from a few particular perſons: Nor has any thing contributed more to bring a reproach upon it, than the vain attempts to magnify it by other means, to the neglect of this.

But I muſt not omit particularly to remind you of the honor and obedience which you owe to your civil ſuperiors; whether to the king as ſupreme, or to governors as unto them that are ſent by him, or to others cloathed with authority under either. The apoſtle, in this ſame epiſtle to Titus, gives him the following direction: "Put them in mind," ſays he, "to be ſubject to "principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates."† You are indiſpenſably bound to obey the good and wholſome laws of ſociety, and all magiſtrates and officers without exception, in the due execution of thoſe laws; and this not for fear of "wrath," at leaſt not only that, "but for conſcience ſake." For they are the "miniſters of God for good;" ordained by him for the "puniſhment of evil-doers, and for a praiſe to them that do well." To oppoſe, inſult or reſiſt them, in the exerciſe of a lawful authority, or lightly to ſpeak evil of, and defame them, is an heinous ſin: It is, in effect, to ſpeak evil of, and oppoſe an ordinance of God, of the utmoſt conſequence to human ſociety. And the apoſtle ſays, "they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation." Meaning hereby, that if particular perſons riſe up in oppoſition to the government and laws eſtabliſhed where they live, they ſhall be condemned of God: Not that a nation or people, generally oppreſſed and tyrannized over, by the exerciſe of an exorbitant, illegal power, ſubverſive of the fundamental laws of a kingdom, may not riſe up in defence of their laws, of the conſtitution, of their civil liberties and rights, in oppoſition to ſuch lawleſs violence; as ſome ſacerdotal ſycophants, and other tools of power have pretended, with equal folly, impudence and impiety; that they might encourage kings to be arbitrary, unjuſt and cruel, and reduce ſubjects to a ſtate of the moſt abject, miſerable ſlavery. The moſt virtuous, the braveſt and moſt enlightened ſpirits of antiquity, of all ages, have ever aſſerted it to be right, honorable and glorious for a people, by any means to rid themſelves of ſuch monſters as common tyrants; even as they would of tygers, wolves, bears and lions: A ſentiment, which will never be loſt out of the world, ſo long as any good ſenſe, true religion and virtue remain in it.

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† Chap. III. 1.

To conclude this branch of my diſcourſe: You will, by no means, deſerve the character of being ſober-minded, if you allow yourſelves in the violation of any of God's commandments reſpecting the honor, duty and ſubjection which you owe to your parents, the civil powers, or any of your other ſuperiors, whether in ſtation or years. Whatever young man diſobeys theſe important precepts of religion, he is not only deſtitute of all chriſtian ſobriety, but of all due regard to the light and dictates of nature, to which they are perfectly conſonant; and is ſo far from being a loyal and worthy ſubject of Chriſt's kingdom, that he is a diſgrace to the civil ſociety of which he is a member, and hardly worthy to live in it.

IX. LET me in the next place, my young brethren, caution you againſt the odious, horrid ſin of *falſehood* and *lying*, as utterly inconſiſtent with all ſobriety of mind. This was one of the ſins, for which the Cretians were particularly infamous. The apoſtle, therefore, reminds Titus of their character in this reſpect, as given them by one of their own prophets or poets; which he confirms, and gives Titus a direction relative thereto. "One of themſelves, even a prophet "of their own ſaid, The Cretians are alway liars "—This witneſs is true: Wherefore rebuke "them ſharply." † And well, ſurely, did they, who were not only ſometimes guilty of this deteſtable ſin, but " alway liars," deſerve to be *ſharply* rebuked.

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† Titus I. 12, 13.

THIS vice is found in perſons of all ages, and all characters, almoſt,—except good ones. Even ſome of the Old, if they are not *alway* liars, yet are *ſometimes* ſo: And as they have lived with a lye in their mouths, ſo they probably die at laſt with one in " their right hand." But this ſeems to be, very particularly, one of the ſins of youth. There is no ſin, which at once ſo early and ſo fully diſcovers the pravity of the human heart, as lying. And this is the reaſon why the pſalmiſt, ſpeaking of the wicked, and their early wandering from the paths of virtue, gives this, rather than any other, as an example thereof; ſaying, ſomewhat hyperbolically indeed, That they are " eſtranged from the womb; and go aſtray as ſoon as they are born, *ſpeaking lies*." Many children there are, who grow up in this evil practice; and ſtrengthen, by cuſtom and habit, the corrupt biaſs and propenſity of nature: Of whom it may be ſaid, with particular propriety, that they are " of their " father the devil; for he is a liar, and the father " of it;" and the luſt of their father they do.

THERE are many ſorts of lying and of liars in the world;—*political, forenſic, medical, mercantile, martial, mechanical, eccleſiaſtical*, &c. &c. A circumſtantial deſcription of any one of them, particularly of the *firſt* and the *laſt* mentioned, would fill many volumes. But I muſt content myſelf with only obſerving in general, That under this head of lying, comes all wilful deception of others by words, to their prejudice, or to the injury of any perſon or perſons whatſoever; whether in the way of defamation or flattery, of bearing witneſs, or of common narration, of trade and commerce, of political wrangling, of juridical debate, of empirical juggling, of eccleſiaſtic impoſture, of trade and commerce; whether with reference to the buſineſs and concerns of life, ordinary or extraordinary; whether relative to this world, or to that which is to come. Whoſoever wilfully deceives another in either of theſe ways, with any view to benefit himſelf, or to hurt and injure any other perſon, is—a LIAR. Conſider then, how many perſons of this infamous character there are in this wicked, falſe world; and how *capacious* a "lake" muſt that be, in which it is ſaid, "ALL liars ſhall have their part." †

FALSEHOOD is a principal prop of the kingdom of darkneſs and of ſatan; of iniquity, ſuperſtition and idolatry, of all vice and unrighteouſneſs amongſt men; the grand engine which the devil works, partly with his own ſkilful hand, and partly by thoſe of his children, in order to accommpliſh his malicious and accurſed deſigns, to ſubvert all order, to confound all right and juſtice, and to deſtroy mankind. For it is by "deceiving the nations," that he ruins them, and ſupports his kingdom. Truth, on the other hand, is the foundation of God's kingdom, conſiſting in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Chriſt therefore "came

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† Rev. XXI. 8.

"into the world, to bear witneſs to the truth." This is the grand ſupport of religion, order, juſtice and human ſociety; neither of which can ſubſiſt without truth. Lying is therefore one of the greateſt ſins; and loving and ſpeaking the truth, one of the moſt neceſſary, the moſt important virtues. This is a material and eſſential branch of chriſtian ſobriety. They are, accordingly, ſometimes joined together in ſcripture, as being cloſely connected: As when the apoſtle ſays, "I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but "ſpeak forth the words of *truth* and *ſoberneſs*." In which paſſage, by the way, truth and ſobriety ſtand in oppoſition, not merely to known, wilful falſehood; but alſo to enthuſiaſtic error and deluſion, ſuperſtition and religious *madneſs*. "I am "not *mad*—but," &c. This is an obſervation, of which I ſhall have occaſion to make ſome farther uſe, before I cloſe the preſent diſcourſe.

LYING is a ſin, ſo frequently and ſolemnly forbidden in the holy ſcriptures; and the ſpeaking of truth is ſo often and poſitively enjoined therein, that it is not neceſſary to refer you to any particular paſſages to this purpoſe. You can have no pretence to ſobriety, unleſs you abſtain from, and abhor lying, as one of the moſt pernicious, execrable vices; a vice which is deſtructive of the whole religious and moral character, and inconſiſtent, in its very nature, with every good and amiable quality, except in appearance only. You are then, to ſpeak truth at all times, and with all perſons; to be ſincere and open, frank and ingenuous in all your intercourſe with the world: So as to avoid the very appearance, and much more the reality, of this ſhameful and abominable ſin of lying; the very name of which is odious, and the imputation of which is uſually and juſtly conſidered as the higheſt reproach, the greateſt affront that one perſon can well offer to another.

THOSE who have had a good, or even tolerable education, are almoſt ſhocked at the very ſound of the word *lye:* At leaſt, they generally affect to be ſo, even while, perhaps, ſome of them have no religion or virtue, and often commit the ſin itſelf; diſguiſing, as well as they can, the horror and infamy of it under ſome ſofter name, thro' an hypocritical ſort of delicacy. But things ſhould be called by their proper names. A lye does not ceaſe to be ſo, and become an innocent thing, by being covered with a good name, any more than a ravening wolf is transformed into an harmleſs animal, by "coming to us in ſheep's cloathing." And let me add, tho' it may perhaps be a paradox to ſome, That a great lye does not become abſolutely no lye, by being told by a *great* man, or a *grave* one, or a young one of a *genteel* education: No; not even tho' the *firſt* puniſhes lying in little ſinners, and the *ſecond* preaches againſt it in the laiety, while the *third* affects to be thunderſtruck, as it were, with the very mention of it!— It were well if people as generally and ſincerely abhorred this ſervile, ſordid, execrable vice, as they diſlike the imputation, and dread to lye under the ſcandal of it. But, alas! the ſame royal pſalmiſt, who obſerves that "men of low degree are vanity," obſerves alſo, that even "men of high degree are a lye." All people in general, and particularly thoſe that are well educated, ſhew a juſt notion of the foul, hateful and infamous nature of this ſin, by their ſo highly reſenting the charge of lying: And if, notwithſtanding this, they practiſe it in any ſhape or form, their juſt conceptions of its foulneſs, will ſerve only to increaſe their own infamy, guilt and puniſhment. Let thoſe of you therefore, my young brethren, that have delicate ears, or nice notions of honor, have true, ſincere and upright hearts alſo; and mouths undefiled with lying. In the language of the pſalmiſt, "keep your tongues from evil, and your lips from ſpeaking guile—For lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." They are alſo an abomination to every good man; to every perſon of any religion, virtue, or real honor.

X. LET me next caution you againſt *raſh* and *immoderate* anger, *furious* reſentment and a *vindictive* ſpirit, as contrary to chriſtian ſobriety of mind. The paſſions of young men are generally ſtrong, impetuous, and hard to be kept within due bounds. This is true, in particular, of thoſe paſſions which are diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *iraſcible*, or the angry and wrathful ones. They are often awakened in the breaſts of the young, with very little, or no juſt provocation. Or, if there is any warrantable ground for them; yet they are often exceſſive in degree; tumultuous, violent and outrageous; breaking forth like ſavage beaſts from their dens and caves, ſeeking to deſtroy and to devour; aiming at little or nothing ſhort of the utter ruin of the perſon who rouſed them up. Hence frequent quarrels and fightings, and ſometimes blood-ſhed and murder. Anger, when undirected, uncontrouled by reaſon, is only another name for fury and frenzy, madneſs and diſtraction; in the paroxiſms of which, even tho' but ſhort, people often do things that give them cauſe for repentance as long as they live; and indeed, not ſeldom, what brings them to an untimely end.†

SUFFERING theſe paſſions to reign in, and to be maſters over you, is plainly incompatible with ſobriety of mind, unleſs madneſs and ſobriety are conſiſtent with each other. In every ſober mind, reaſon is predominant; keeping all the paſſions, and particularly anger and reſentment, under ſubjection, or within its proper bounds. Any man, whether young or old, who is often as it were drunk with anger and revenge, is as far from being a ſober one, as if he were as often intoxicated with ſtrong drink. Nay, the former is, of the two, rather more criminal than the latter; there being nothing ſo directly contrary to that love or charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs, the ſpirit of the goſpel, and the fulfilling of the law, as a wrathful, revengeful and implacable ſpirit. If one of them does, in a ſort, make fools and beaſts of men, the other, I had almoſt ſaid, makes them devils.

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† ———— Qui non moderabitur iræ,
Infectum volet eſſe, dolor quod ſuaſerit et mens,
Dum pœnas odio per vim feſtinat inulto.
IRA FVROR BREVIS eſt. ———— HOR.

The angry paſſions are as natural to mankind as any other: They are born, and alſo grow up with us to a criminal exceſs, unleſs prevented by a religious education, and the grace of God. This is the true meaning of an expreſſion in one of St. Paul's epiſtles, often perverted to an unſcriptural and horrid, if not blaſphemous ſenſe—"Among whom we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind; and were *by nature children of wrath*, even as others."[†] In

conformity

[†] Eph. II 3. N. B. Tekna phusei Orgees, ("by nature children of wrath") according to the Greek idiom, ſignifies children naturally of a wrathful *temper*, or angry *diſpoſition*; the *ſubjects* of wrath conſider'd as a *paſſion inherent in*, and natural to them: Not the *objects* of God's anger, as if they were odious to him, or under his wrath, even from their birth. Neither does tekna, [children] here, any more intend *infants* juſt born, than the ſame word means infants in almoſt numberleſs other places. Thus in this ſame Epiſtle, Ch. 5. 1. "Be ye followers of God as dear *children*."—And ch. 6. 1. *Children*, obey your parents in the Lord"—So 1 John 3. 10. "In this the *children* of God are manifeſt,"—And Rom. 8. 17. If *children*, then heirs, heirs of God," &c. In the language of ſcripture adult, and even aged perſons, are all ſtyled children. Nor is there any reaſon for underſtanding *infants* hereby, in this famous text. It was indeed before allowed that anger, or wrath, is a paſſion that is *natural* to mankind, and born with us as our other paſſions are. And if it is indulged afterwards to exceſs, it doubtleſs becomes criminal in the ſight of God. This is the utmoſt that can be made of this place. To ſuppoſe the meaning of it is, that even *infants*, are objects of God's wrath, is to put a ſenſe upon it which the Greek will

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conformity whereto, the ſame apoſtle, in his Epiſtle to Titus, deſcribes his own temper before his converſion, [i. e. his temper "by nature"] and that of others, in the following words: "We ourſelves alſo were ſometimes "fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers "luſts and pleaſures, living in *malice* and *envy*, "*hateful* and *hating* one another."† This is a temper and practice, directly the reverſe of that which, in the preceding words, he exhorts Titus to inculcate upon the Cretians; viz. "to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good [charitable] work, to ſpeak evil "of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, "ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men."

THE ſins of raſh anger, and exceſſive reſentment, are particularly forbidden in the holy ſcriptures, as contrary to true wiſdom, virtue, and that ſelf-government, in which ſobriety of mind very eſſentially conſiſts. They are ſometimes repreſented as ſure ſigns and marks of folly. "The fool rageth and "is

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not well admit: And it is beſides, a moſt irrational, unſcriptural interpretation—What ideas muſt thoſe have of the juſtice, goodneſs and mercy of God, who imagine that infants juſt born, are the objects of his wrath? yea, that many of them, without actual ſinning, are eternally damned! I ſeriouſly declare that I would not *truſt* my perſon, or property, with thoſe who have ſuch conceptions of the divine *juſtice* and *goodneſs*, if I did not charitably hope, that many of them think themſelves bound in duty to be much *juſter* and *better* than they repreſent their God!

† Tit. iii. 3.

"is confident," ſays Solomon: "He that is "ſoon angry dealeth fooliſhly.‡" And again: "Be not haſty in thy ſpirit to be angry; for "anger reſteth in the boſom of fools.‖" On the other hand, the Wiſe Man ſpeaks of ſuppreſſing wrath, and forgiving injuries, as a perſon's wiſdom and glory: "He that is "ſlow to anger is better than the mighty; "and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that "taketh a city.*" "The diſcretion of a man "deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to "paſs over a tranſgreſſion.†" And once more: "He that is ſlow to anger, is of great under-"ſtanding: but he that is haſty of ſpirit, ex-"alteth folly.*" There is a dignity and glory in ſuppreſſing reſentment, and in being of a placable, forgiving temper, which a little, dark and groveling mind has no conception of; but, on the contrary, looks upon it as mean, baſe and diſhonourable.

THE apoſtle Paul, allowing the lawfulneſs of anger in ſome caſes, cautions us againſt the exceſſes of it, in a manner which ſuppoſes unreaſonable anger to be a peculiarly diabolical paſſion: "Be ye angry, and ſin not, ſays "he; let not the ſun go down upon your "wrath; neither give place to the devil. †" Our bleſſed Saviour, who was truly meek and lowly in heart, aſſures us, "that whoſoever "is angry with his brother without a cauſe,

"ſhall

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‡ Prov. xiv. 16, 17. ‖ Eccl. vii. 9. * Prov. xvi. 32. † Ch. xix. 11. * Chap. xiv. 29. † Eph. iv. 26, 27.

"ſhall be in danger of the judgment." He expreſsly makes the forgiving of injuries, one condition of our being forgiven of God; ſaying, "If ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your "heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: But "if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive you.‡" Let me remind you of another paſſage of ſcripture, which ſo fully expreſſes your duty, both negatively and poſitively, as to the point in hand, that it will hardly be neceſſary to add any thing farther upon it—"Recompenſe to "no man evil for evil—If it be poſſible, as "much as lieth in you, live peaceably with "all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not your"ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath. "[i. e. to the righteous judgment of God.] "For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will "repay, ſaith the Lord. Therefore if thine "enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give "him drink. For in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap "coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome "of evil, but overcome evil with good.‖" Thus you ſee, how an angry and wrathful, a malicious and revengeful temper of mind, ſtands in direct oppoſition to that charity and meekneſs, that peaceableneſs and univerſal good-will, which is at once ſo eminently the characteriſtic of the chriſtian religion, and ſo little cultivated by many of its profeſſors: Yea, which a falſe and hypocritical zeal, not according to knowledge, often ſacrifices merely ly for the ſake of promoting, by any means, right or wrong, whatever has, in particular countries, obtained the faſcinating name of *orthodoxy*; tho', perhaps, the very dregs of antichriſtian error and hereſy; or, at beſt, ſome minute and doubtful ſpeculations of fanciful men miſ-ſpending their leiſure hours. But you, my beloved young brethren, will put on a meek, charitable and friendly diſpoſition towards all men; never indulging yourſelves in that wrath, which worketh not the righteouſneſs of God; and leaſt of all, when religion, holy and heaven-born religion, is the thing in queſtion. In a word, you will remember the admonition of the apoſtle James, with which I cloſe this head of diſcourſe: "If ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your "hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the "truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from "above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. For "where envying and ſtrife is, there is confu-"ſion, and every evil work. But the wiſ-"dom that is from above, is firſt pure, then "peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full "of mercy and good fruits, without partia-"lity, and without hypocriſy: And the fruit "of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them "that make peace." † — Envy being mentioned in this paſſage, as a great ſin, and one principal ſource of confuſion and evil works; I may from hence take occaſion, in the next place, to ſpeak briefly of it. Wherefore,

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‡ Matt. vi. 14, 15. ‖ Rom. xii. 17, &c.

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† James iii. 14, &c.

XI. An *envious* temper is inconſiſtent with true ſobriety of mind. This is an uneaſy paſſion that is well known, ariſing from obſerving the real or ſuppoſed felicity of others, in ſome one or more reſpects, on a compariſon of our own condition with theirs ; being a particular modification of inordinate ſelf-love, or a natural reſult thereof. For, in propriety of language, we envy nothing to others, but what we ſecretly covet ourſelves ; wiſhing that we, inſtead of they, had the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it ; whether it be riches, power, beauty, wit, learning, or any thing elſe. So that envy is a criminal impotence of mind, ſtanding in oppoſition to reaſonable ſelf-love, and contentment with our own condition, and to that charity which delighteth in the felicity of others. The envious man thinks that he has too little, and the object of his envy too much, of what he conſiders as good and deſireable in its nature. From hence reſults that peculiar feeling or ſentiment, expreſſed by the term envy ; at once irrational and criminal ; nor leſs tormenting to the mind ſubject thereto, than the wracks of the crueleſt tyrants are to the bodies of their ſlaves. ‡ Yea, it drinks up the ſpirits, and conſumeth the very fleſh, bones and marrow. " A ſound heart is the life of the fleſh, " ſays Solomon ; " but envy is the rottenneſs of the bones. "

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‡ Invidus alterius macreſcit rebus opimis :
Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni
Majus tormentum —— Hor.

No perſon is qualified to live eaſily and happily in this world, that is of an envious diſpoſition; much leſs is he prepared for a better. In any world you muſt needs be miſerable, unleſs you conquer this evil paſſion; which yet is, perhaps, one of the hardeſt and laſt that is ſubdued. It is not without great difficulty that even wiſe and good men wholly ſuppreſs the workings of it in their breaſts; eſpecially when they obſerve fooliſh and wicked men in great outward dignity, honor and proſperity. The pſalmiſt (Aſaph) ſpeaks of this as a ſore trial to himſelf. "As "for me," ſays he, "my feet were almoſt "gone; my ſteps had well-nigh ſlipped: For "I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw "the proſperity of the wicked.—Their eyes "ſtand out with fatneſs, they have more "than heart can wiſh. They are corrupt, "and ſpeak wickedly concerning oppreſſion: "they ſpeak loftily. They ſet their mouth "againſt the heavens; and their tongue "walketh thro' the earth."† This is a temper which you muſt carefully guard againſt; and particularly, take heed that you do not indulge it with reſpect to bad men. Here the chief danger lies. You may without pain, poſſibly with pleaſure, ſee wiſe and good men proſper in the world; and yet be highly criminal in repining at ſeeing thoſe that are of a contrary character, wallowing in riches and pleaſures, or "ſet in great dignity:"

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† See Pſalm LXXIII. 2,——14.

nity;" thinking this is rather an honeſt indignation againſt vice, than any ſin in you. But you are miſtaken if you think ſo. It is owing, either to your not duly conſidering the providence of God, which over-rules all things, or to your having too high an eſteem yourſelves for thoſe earthly things, which you envy to bad men; or rather to both.

If you would be truly wiſe, or ſober-minded, you muſt bear without envy, to ſee others excel you even in things that are good and praiſe-worthy; in learning, wiſdom and virtue; you muſt love and eſteem them the more for it, and endeavour, as far as may be, to imitate them. Much leſs ought you to be vexed, and to murmur, if you ſee others richer, and more proſperous in the world than yourſelves; more regarded and eſteemed; if they live in more gaiety, affluence and ſplendor, than it is in your power to do; or if their deſigns meet with ſucceſs, while your's are croſſed and fruſtrated. Such things as theſe, my young brethren, you muſt learn to bear, if you would be wiſe and virtuous, or live happily. Let me add, that if thoſe perſons that are richer, more eſteemed, and more highly exalted in the world than you, are alſo wiſer and better, as may poſſibly be the caſe; certainly you ought to rejoice with them in their proſperity, in the bleſſings of divine providence beſtowed upon them, inſtead of being envious at them; according to the apoſtolic injunction, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." But if they are fooliſh and wicked, while you are wiſe and virtuous, there is ſtill the leſs reaſon why you ſhould envy them any outward proſperity. This were as if an honeſt man ſhould envy to the thief, robber or murderer, the rich velvet, the faſhionable wig, and laced cloaths, in which he ſees him carted to *Tyburn!* To cure you of envying the fooliſh and wicked, only do as Aſaph did—Enter into the "ſanctuary "of God, and underſtand their end. Surely "thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places: thou "caſtedſt them down to deſtruction. How "are they brought down to deſolation as in "a moment![*]" This is the moſt effectual preſervative againſt that common weakneſs, that criminal impotence of mind, envy; as well as a ſovereign remedy for ſo ſad a diſorder, in thoſe upon whom it has already ſeized, whether old or young. I ſhall therefore diſmiſs this particular with the counſel and preſcription of the royal pſalmiſt. "Fret not "thyſelf becauſe of evil doers; neither be "thou envious againſt the workers of ini- "quity. For they ſhall ſoon be cut down "like the graſs, and wither as the green "herb.—Commit thy way unto the Lord; "truſt alſo in him.—Reſt in the Lord, and "wait patiently for him. Fret not thyſelf "becauſe of him that proſpereth in his way, "becauſe of the man who bringeth evil de- "vices to paſs. Ceaſe from anger, and for-

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[*] Pſalm lxxiii. 17—

"ſake wrath: fret not thyſelf in any wiſe to "do evil. For evil doers ſhall be cut off— "Yet a little while, and the wicked ſhall not "be: yea, thou ſhalt diligently conſider his "place, and it ſhall not be." *

XII. All *exceſſive indulgence* of your ſenſual appetites in *eating* and *drinking*, is directly repugnant to ſobriety. We often ſpeak of ſobriety, more eſpecially in contradiſtinction to the ſhameful vices of intemperance; of which theſe two are not the leaſt *brutal* †. They are probably more frequently the vices of youngmen,than of the old,tho' far from being peculiar to them. But be that as it may; it is certain they are great, diſhonourable and pernicious vices, by whomſoever they are practiſed. They are deſtructive at once to the health of body and mind; and are great occaſions of conſuming both the time and the ſubſtance. They indiſpoſe people for ſerving either God or their generation. They are fruitful of miſchief, not only to thoſe that are guilty of them, but to ſociety; and more particularly to their own families, if any they have.

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* Pſal. xxxvii. 1——10.

† The apoſtle ſpeaks of the ſeveral vices of intemperance, under the terms—"pollutions of the world;" and compares thoſe perſons who return to, after having forſaken them, to a "dog returning to his vomit," and a "ſow, to her wallowing in the mire." [2 Pet. ii. 20, 22.] The courtly Horace did not think the ſame images too *groſs* or *indelicate*, in ſpeaking of the ſame vices under the fable of the *Circæan* cup—and this with expreſs reference to a *King*, ULYSSES—

Quæ ſi cum ſociis ſtultus, cupiduſque bibiſſet,
----------------fuiſſet *turpis* et excors;
Vixiſſet *canis immundus*, vel *amica luto ſus*.

These vices are very frequently and ſeverely cenſured in ſcripture, under the well-known terms, *drunkenneſs* and *gluttony*. Let me remind you of ſome of the many ſcriptural warnings againſt theſe ſhameful and ruinous exceſſes. " Hear thou, my Son, " ſays Solomon, " and be wiſe, and guide thine " heart in the way. Be not amongſt wine-" bibbers ; amongſt riotous eaters of fleſh. " For the drunkard and the glutton ſhall " ſurely come to poverty ; and drowſineſs " ſhall cloath a man with rags. " ‡ And again in the ſame chapter : " Who hath wo ? " who hath ſorrow ? who hath contentions ? " who hath babbling ? who hath wounds " without cauſe ? who hath redneſs of eyes ? " They that tarry long at the wine—Look " not thou upon the wine when it is red, " when it giveth his color in the cup, when " it moveth itſelf aright. At the laſt it biteth " like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder." Amongſt divers other woes and curſes, denounced againſt ſeveral ſorts of ſinners, [Iſai. ch. V.] this is one : " Wo unto them that " riſe up early in the morning, that they may " follow ſtrong drink ; that continue until " night, till wine inflame them. And the " harp and viol, the tabret and pipe, and " wine are in their feaſts : But they regard " not the work of the Lord, neither conſider " the operation of his hand."

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‡ Prov. xxiii. 19, 20, 21.

You would do well alſo to conſider our Saviour's well-known parable ‡ of the fooliſh young man, who waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living; and the miſery and diſhonor to which he was reduced, when he became the keeper and feeder of ſwine for another, and would fain have filled himſelf with their *huſks*, after he had ſpent all he had in luxury and exceſs; but was not permitted to do even *that*. Tho' the ultimate deſign of this part of the parable, is to repreſent the miſery and ſhame to which all wicked men in general bring themſelves by forſaking God, and the houſe of their heavenly Father, where there is " bread enough and to ſpare "—true and abundant felicity; yet it may be uſefully improved in the literal ſenſe, as an example to the young, of the ſad effects of riot, luxury and intemperance; and a ſolemn leſſon or warning to them, to beware of thoſe vices in particular. But our Saviour gives you a more direct admonition with reference to theſe ſins: " Take heed to your ſelves, " ſays he, " leſt at *any time* your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs— " and ſo that day come upon you unawares."* —" Leſt at any time " — There are times of peculiar temptation to theſe vices; particularly ſeaſons of rejoicing, whether public, or more private. And there are perſons who, tho' not habitually given to intemperance, are yet ſome[illegible]mes ſhamefully overtaken on ſuch occaſions. It will, therefore, be your wiſdom and duty, to be particularly upon your guard at all ſuch ſeaſons.

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‡ Luke xxv.

* Luke xx. 34.

THE apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of ſome perſons, "whoſe God is their *belly*, and whoſe glory "is their ſhame." This is peculiarly applicable to the drunkard and the glutton; eſpecially to thoſe who even make their boaſts, what mighty feats they have done in eating and drinking; what heroes they are at the table; and how many men of might, by means of their ſuperior prowefs, they have ſeen fallen as *dead* under it. Such ſhameful and ſhameleſs men there are in the world; and ſome of them perhaps, at the ſame time, very zealous for the religious obſervation of *Chriſmas*, or of *Thankſgiving-days*; thinking thoſe who diſregard them, very impious, wicked men!—The ſame apoſtle admoniſhes you and all, who are bleſſed with the light of the goſpel, to abſtain from all ſuch works of heatheniſh darkneſs and ignorance as theſe; ſaying, "Let us caſt off the "works of darkneſs, and let us put on the "armour of light. Let us walk honeſtly as "in the day; not in rioting and drunkenneſs, "not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in "ſtrife and envying. But put ye on the "Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and make no proviſion "for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof."

NOW, it is evident that he is void of chriſtain ſobriety, who addicts himſelf to either of theſe vices. For what a ſoleciſm would it be, to ſpeak of a religious, ſober drunkard or glutton! If you are truly ſober and virtuous, you will not allow yourſelves in an over delicate and luxurious way of living; much leſs in ſuch groſly criminal exceſſes as theſe. One deſign of our Saviour's parable of Lazarus, and the rich man who was "cloathed in fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly *every day*," ‡ ſeems to have been, to reprove ſuch a way of life as dangerous, and contrary to the ſpirit of religion; even tho' people ſhould abſtain from all groſs acts of intemperance. And it is, unqueſtionably, inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety, to make it as it were a buſineſs to pamper the body, and to live a delicate, luxurious life; tho' a perſon ſhould never be chargeable with gluttony or drunkenneſs. If this is what is uppermoſt in a man's thoughts and concerns, inſtead of the cultivating his mind, and pleaſing God, he does, without doubt, "make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof," in the ſenſe wherein it is forbidden by the apoſtle; and walks after the fleſh, not after the ſpirit.

To conclude this head of diſcourſe: If you are ſober-minded, you will make the pleaſing of God your end, your habitual endeavour; and will of conſequence, reſtrain your natural appetites within the bounds of ſuch a temperance, as is beſt adapted to health, ſtrength, and activity; ſuch a moderation, as will moſt contribute to the vigor both of body and mind;

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‡ Luke xvi.

mind ; and thereby fit you for diſcharging the various duties of life and godlineſs, with ſpirit and alertneſs: Inſtead of having your bodies and ſenſes ſtupified, and even your diviner part benumbed, borne down and carnalized, [†] by an exceſſive load of meat and drink ; at once to your own ſhame, and to the ſcandalous abuſe of the bounties of providence, given to be received only with temperance and thankſgiving, by them that know the truth. From theſe, One may naturally proceed to ſpeak of ſome other luſts of the fleſh, which are to be avoided as contrary to ſobriety. Accordingly let me caution you, in the next place,

XIII. Against all thoſe vices which, in the language of ſcripture, are comprehended under the terms *uncleanneſs*, and *the luſt of uncleanneſs*. The ſeveral vices included in theſe general terms, are emphatically the vices of youth. And they are accordingly ſuppopoſed to be the ſins primarily intended by the apoſtle Paul, in one of his epiſtles, by *youthful luſts* [*]— "Flee alſo youthful luſts," ſays he : i. e. all the vices of laſciviouſneſs and incontinence, or thoſe which are oppoſed to chaſtity.

Uncleanness is a ſin of a very heinous nature, directly oppoſite to chriſtian ſobriety, and of pernicious conſequence to ſociety, as well as to them that are enſlaved to it. There are not indeed wanting, old ſinners and ſervants of ſatan, who tranſgreſs in this way, to their own infamy; and often, to the ruin of their eſtates, families, health, bodies and ſouls at once. But yet, as was intimated before, this is a ſin which reigns more generally amongſt the young; who therefore need to be very particularly warned againſt it. The holy ſcriptures abound with prohibitions, and very ſevere cenſures of it. So that there will be ſcarce need of my doing any thing more upon this head, than to remind you of ſome of the many paſſages of ſcripture relative hereto; to the folly and miſery of this vice, and the heavy curſes of God denounced againſt thoſe who are guilty of it.

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[*] 2 Tim. ii. 22.

[†] -------------------- Vides ut pallidus omnis
Cœnâ deſurgat dubiâ ? quin corpus onuſtum
Heſternis vitiis *animum* quoque prægravat unà,
Atque affigit humo *divinæ particulam auræ*. Hor.

You cannot be ignorant that one of the ten commandments, in which the moral law is epitomized, or contained in brief, relates particularly to this ſin—"Thou ſhalt not commit adultery." And as this vice, in the various evil forms of it, frequently accompanies intemperance in other reſpects, yea, is often the effect thereof; we find it mentioned and cenſured together with them—"I will puniſh them for their ways, and reward them for their doings. For they ſhall eat, and not have enough; they ſhall commit whoredom, and ſhall not increaſe; becauſe they have left off to take heed to the Lord. Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart."‡

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‡ Hoſ. iv.

So again:—"When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by troops to the harlots houſes. They were as fed horſes in the morning: Every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this!" †

THERE are many paſſages in the Proverbs of Solomon, which particularly ſet forth the folly, diſhonor, and ruinous effects of this vice: And, ſurely, no perſon was more capable of giving good counſel to young men in this reſpect than he—"My ſon," ſays he, "attend unto my wiſdom, and bow thine ear to my underſtanding—For the lips of a ſtrange woman [i. e. an harlot] drop as an hony-comb, and her mouth is ſmoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged ſword. Her feet go down to death, and her ſteps take hold on hell—Remove thy way from her, and come not nigh the door of her houſe; leſt thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Leſt ſtrangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labors be in the houſe of ſtrangers; and thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed." ‡ And again, towards the end of the ſame chapter—"Rejoice with the WIFE of thy youth—And why wilt thou, my ſon, be raviſht with a ſtrange woman?—For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings." In the following chapter, ſpeaking ſtill of the ſtrange woman, or harlot, the wiſe man ſays, "Luſt not

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† Jer. Chap. V.

‡ Prov. Ch. V.

after her beauty in thine heart, neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of an whoriſh woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adultereſs will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his boſom, and his cloaths not be burnt?"—He ſpeaks a little after of thoſe who are addicted to this vice, as deſtitute of underſtanding—" Whoſo committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh underſtanding; he that doeth it, deſtroyeth his own ſoul. A wound and diſhonor ſhall he get; and his reproach ſhall not be wiped away."‡

THE next chapter is chiefly taken up with an account of the leud woman, or harlot, and the deceitful, wicked arts, which ſhe practiſes too ſucceſsfully on young men void of underſtanding and experience. After a very circumſtantial deſcription of her guileful, ſerpentine managements and enticements, the wiſe man proceeds to relate the miſerable end of the fooliſh unhappy young one; and to ſet him up for a warning to future ages. The account ends thus: " With her much fair ſpeech ſhe cauſed him to yield; with the flattering of her lips ſhe forced him. He goeth after her ſtraitway," (be pleaſed to take particular notice of what follows—) " as an ox goeth to the ſlaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the ſtocks; till a dart ſtrike thro' his liver, as a bird haſteth to the ſnare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways; go not after her paths. For ſhe hath caſt down many wounded; yea, many ſtrong men have been ſlain by her. Her houſe is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."†

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‡ Prov. Chap. VI.

To theſe ſolemn counſels and warnings out of the *old teſtament*, let me ſubjoin two or three from the *new*—"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence—For which things ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience."‡ And again: "The Lord knoweth how—to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed; but CHIEFLY them that walk after the fleſh in the luſt of uncleanneſs"—‖ "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy."*—"Know ye not that your bodies are members of Chriſt? Shall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!—He that committeth fornication, ſinneth againſt his own body."§

THERE are divers kinds of leudneſs and impurity, which belong to this head, beſides adultery and fornication in the common groſs ſenſe. We read in ſcripture of "committing adultery in the *heart*;" and of ſome perſons who have "*eyes* full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin." All obſcene, laſcivious or unchaſte *words*, are alſo criminal: To which the apoſtle refers, when he ſays, "Fornication, and all uncleanneſs, let it not be once *named* among you, as

becometh

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† Prov. Ch. VII. ‡ Col. III. 5, &c. ‖ 2 Pet. Ch. II. 9, 10.
* 1 Cor. III. 16, 17. § Chap. VI. 15, &c.

becometh ſaints: Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh *talking* and *jeſting*, which are not convenient." There are ſome ſtill more unnatural, ſhameful and brutal ſins, which belong to this head. For, as the apoſtle obſerves, it is "even a ſhame to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of ſome in ſecret." I ſhall therefore ſpare at once your modeſty and my own, in not being more particular—

Now, my young brethren, if you are ſober-minded, you will keep yourſelves pure from all theſe abominations; againſt which the wrath of God is ſo plainly revealed from heaven. Particularly, you will avoid all forbidden intercourſe with leud, proſtitute and infamous women; of whom, it is ſaid, there are many amongſt us. I know not; but wherever they are, they may juſtly be accounted the diſgrace, not only of their own ſex, but of human nature; the peſts of ſociety; the contempt and abhorrence of all good men; the daughters of ſatan, and the execration of the Almighty. And will you give your ſubſtance, your ſtrength, your honor, to ſuch infamous wretches as theſe; who thirſt for your wealth, who lay wait for the precious life, and whoſe doors are the gates of hell! Would you diſhonour the members of Chriſt?—would you defile the temple of God, which is holy, with ſuch filthy and deteſtable, tho' probably painted and gilded idols!—Or, as to any of that ſex, who are yet undebauched, would you be "firſt in the tranſgreſſion?" Would, or could you, if you tho't of the matter, be guilty of ſo diſhonourable, ſo baſe, ſo cruel a thing, as to entice an innocent, virtuous young woman to forfeit her virtue and honor?—at beſt to her ſhame and grief all her days; and, not improbably, to the utter loſs of her reputation, and engaging her in ſuch a courſe of life, as will ruin her both ſoul and body! O baſe, horrid, infamous deed! And if the perſon thus enſnared and ruined by you, ſhould be one that had any regard for you; this would but increaſe the blackneſs and horror of the crime, by adding *ingratitude* to it!

The infinitely wiſe and beneficent Author of nature, and of all the ſocial paſſions, affections and inſtincts in mankind, has, by his expreſs laws and inſtitutions, made proviſion for the regular, virtuous and honourable gratification of them. And, in one very material inſtance, relative to the point in hand, the following paſſages of ſcripture will ſhew you at once, both what that courſe of life is, which He has ordained, and the great guilt and danger of deviating from it: I mean thoſe very grave and ſober words of the apoſtle Paul—"To avoid fornication, let EVERY man have his own wife, and EVERY woman her own huſband."†—"Marriage is HONOURABLE in ALL, and the bed undefiled: But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."‡ ☞

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† 1 Cor. VII. 2. ‡ Heb. XIII. 4.

☞ Among the numerous bad effects of pride and luxury in life, the prevention of MARRIAGE is not the leaſt. There are many men in the world, who, tho' in circumſtances to ſupport a family comfortably and decently, will not comply with the order of God and nature, becauſe they are not in a capacity to live in ſuch affluence and ſplendor as they deſire;

XIV. Let me remind you, in the next place, that all *fraud* and *injuſtice* are abſolutely inconſiſtent

ſuch as their fathers live, or lived in ; or ſuch as many of their acquaintance live in : That is, in other words, becauſe they have not much more of the world than they need. And the young, of the other amiable ſex, having been brought up in a delicate, ſumptuous way, will not marry, perhaps, till they have the offer of ſuch matches, that they can immediately be maintained near, if not quite, in as genteel and grand a manner as that, in which they were brought up in their fathers houſes ; or that in which they ſee ſome of their cotemporaries live. Theſe are facts, as to many perſons of both ſexes. But how irrational is it, that young gentlemen and ladies ſhould expect to begin the world with as much equipage and grandeur, or to live *at firſt* in as ſumptuous a manner as their parents could well do *at laſt*, after having, by the bleſſing of God on many years induſtry, acquired riches ? Can any expect that their parents ſhould either make away with themſelves, or give up all to them while they live ? One of theſe would be neceſſary in order to their living in the like affluence. Nor would even this ſuffice, except in a few caſes. For moſt parents have more than one, two or three children ; many have ſix, eight, ten, or more, to inherit their eſtates. So that giving up all to be divided amongſt them, would not put them into ſuch circumſtances, as to enable them to live in the ſame manner in which they were brought up. Which, or ſomething very near it, is what many ſeem to inſiſt on, as the condition of their entering into the marriage ſtate. Vain and extravagant imagination indeed ! It is to expect what is naturally impoſſible. And the conſequence hereof is, that many perſons live all their days, and more ſtill, much the greater and better part of them, in an unnatural ſtate, contrary to the expreſs ordinance of God. And many of the men who live thus, betake themſelves to ſuch poſitively vicious courſes, (it is needleſs to ſay in *what reſpects*) as are at once diſhonourable to themſelves, ruinous to many perſons of the other ſex, of low condition, and as render both, the nuſances and diſgrace of ſociety. Beſides : the increaſe of mankind is hereby prevented. For as to thoſe who live continently all their days in a ſingle ſtate, (whether many or few) they are the occaſion of no addition to the numbers of ſociety : They are "written childleſs ;" and do not leave any to ſupply even their own places, when they are taken off the ſtage. And as to thoſe who live otherwiſe, ſiſtent with ſobriety. Certainly, a diſhoneſt, injurious perſon cannot be a ſober One, in the ſenſe of ſcripture; wherein every ſpecies of diſhoneſty, unrighteouſneſs and fraud, is ſo frequently and ſolemnly forbidden. "What! "know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not "inherit the kingdom of God?"—

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wiſe, in a promiſcuous or lawleſs concubinage; the experience of all ages has verified one part of the curſe denounced againſt ſuch perſons, by the God of nature and order, *viz.* "They ſhall commit whoredom, *but they ſhall not increaſe*; "becauſe they have left off to take heed to the Lord." [Hoſ. iv. 10.] That is, they ſhall not *increaſe* in any ſort of proportion to thoſe who obſerve the divine inſtitution of marriage. So that, inſtead of leaving behind them *many ſons* and *daughters* honourably born, for the ſupport, increaſe and ornament of ſociety, they furniſh it only with a *few b-ſt-rds;* who are alſo commonly brought up in ſuch a way, unhappy perſons! as gives themſelves, their guilty parents and the commonwealth, cauſe rather to wiſh they had *never been*, than the contrary! There are, indeed, ſome perſons born under theſe unhappy circumſtances, who prove real ornaments and bleſſings to ſociety: Nor ought any of them to be deſpiſed merely on account of their having had ſuch profligate parents.

Theſe are a few of the many civil and political bad conſequences of celibacy; one principal occaſion of which in this country, is that "pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world:"---A kind of pride, which will not permit people to marry, unleſs they have much more than nature requires; and can live, not only comfortably, but in ſplendor, make a figure in the world, and "fare ſumptuouſly every day:"---A kind of pride, which ſeems to be growing upon us inſtead of abating, and threatens the worſt of evils, temporal and eternal. It is partly owing to this, that not a few perſons are arrived at ſuch effrontery and impiety in their celibate, criminal way of life, as even to *defame* the original inſtitution of Heaven, and that *ſtate* which the Spirit of God has ſince declared *honourable in all*. This is one of the ſureſt evidences of a groſly depraved mind. And I cannot but add, that that pride of life, which is one principal means of preventing marriage, is of much worſe conſequence in a young country, thin of inhabitants, than in an old one, already nearly, or perhaps fully peopled.

Some of you, my young brethren, are yet in your minority, under the immediate care and government of your parents, or of guardians. Others of you may be ſervants or apprentices. Now, you may not, in any reſpect, wrong or defraud either your parents, your guardians, or your maſters, any more than another perſon, by taking any thing to your own uſe, which belongs to them: I mean, without their expreſs permiſſion, or their known general allowance and approbation. One might here apply, not improperly, the words of the apoſtle, tho' written originally with another view—"The heir as "long as he is a child, differeth nothing from "a ſervant, tho' he be lord of all; but is under "tutors and governors, until the time appointed "of the father."† Some children and heirs may, perhaps, imagine that it is no crime for them clandeſtinely to take and uſe what belongs to their parents; but this is a great miſtake. They have no right, no more than a ſervant has, to any thing beſides what is given to, or allowed them: And it will be highly criminal in you to take, at your own diſcretion, any thing that is your parents. Neither may ſons, ſervants or apprentices be, in any reſpect, unfaithful to the truſt repoſed in them reſpectively. They are obliged to be punctually honeſt, upright and diligent in whatever is confided to their care, and in whatever they are employed by their parents or maſters; faithfully regarding their orders and intereſt, as they will anſwer it to God.

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† Gal. IV. 1.

I HARDLY need to add, after this, that you are all in general, both thoſe that are minors, and thoſe that are of age to act for yourſelves, to be ſtrictly juſt and upright in all your dealings and intercourſe with others; doing to them "whatever you would that they ſhould do to you." For this is not only the law, the prophets, and the goſpel of Chriſt; but the dictate of nature; and found, almoſt in the ſame words, in ſome of the heathen moraliſts. So that all injuſtice, iniquity and fraud towards man, of every kind and degree, is repugnant to the light of nature, as well as to chriſtian ſobriety, and the ſtrict morals of the goſpel. I may therefore diſmiſs the preſent head, with this brief mention of it; only referring you to the holy ſcriptures, and to your own conſciences, which will at once conſent to every thing enjoined therein, relative to juſtice betwixt man and man.—— I proceed therefore to obſerve, in the next place,

XV. THAT an *avaritious, covetous* and *worldly* diſpoſition, or the immoderate deſire and love of riches, is alſo repugnant to ſobriety. "He that maketh haſte to be rich," ſays Solomon, "ſhall not be innocent."—And, "they that will be rich," ſays the apoſtle Paul, "fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves thro' with many ſorrows." And our bleſſed Saviour has ſaid, "Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth"—"Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs." He ſpeaks of a ſtrong attachment to the world, as abſolutely inconſiſtent with true religion; ſaying, "No man can "ſerve two maſters; for either he will hate the "one and love the other; or elſe he will hold "to the one, and deſpiſe the other. *Ye cannot "ſerve God and mammon.*"

COVETOUSNESS is indeed commonly and juſtly accounted the vice rather of old age, than of youth. However, inſtances of it even in the latter, are not ſo rare and extraordinary, as to render a caution of this nature ſuperfluous or inexpedient in a diſcourſe to young men. The apoſtle John, to be ſure, did not think ſuch admonitions needleſs for them. For it is more particularly and directly to young men, that he addreſſes himſelf thus in his firſt epiſtle—"I have "written unto you, young men—Love not the "world, neither the things that are in the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the "Father is not in him—And the world paſſeth "away, and the luſt thereof, but he that doeth "the will of God, abideth forever."

As I juſt now intimated to you, there are ſome examples of a covetous, worldly temper even in young men: And there is one melancholly inſtance hereof recorded in the new teſtament. The ſtory is related by three of the evangeliſts,† without any conſiderable variation; and it is particularly worthy of your ſerious attention. This unhappy young man came to our

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† Mat. Ch. XIX. Mark Ch. X. and Luke Ch. XVIII.

Saviour with an apparent, and doubtleſs ſome real concern, about the ſalvation of his ſoul; ſaying, "Good maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" By what follows, it appears that he was free from all groſs and ſcandalous vices, in the uſual ſenſe of theſe terms. And one of the evangeliſts ſays, that "Jeſus beholding him, loved him." However, our Lord knowing at the ſame time, that the love of this world reigned in his heart; perceiving alſo, that he had far too high an opinion of his own virtues and righteouſneſs; and being willing to prove him, and ſhew him to himſelf, ſaid, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: And come and follow me." But the manner in which he received this counſel and admonition, and his conduct thereon, as related in the next verſe, ſhews that even this apparently ſerious young man, who was, in ſome reſpects, beloved by our Lord, ſtill preferred a preſent treaſure on earth, to a future one in heaven, that faileth not. For it is ſaid, "But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful; for he had great poſſeſſions." From whence our Saviour took occaſion to admoniſh all that were preſent, concerning the deceitfulneſs of riches, the danger attending them, and the fatal conſequences of a worldly mind; ſaying, "Verily, I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Or, as it is expreſſed in another evangeliſt, "How hardly ſhall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God!"

Now, if you are truly wiſe, you will not follow the example of this unhappy young man; but conſider it as left upon record for your warning: And not ſuffer the love of gold that periſheth, to reign in your hearts, inſtead of the love of Chriſt and of God, and of the true riches;—that far more excellent, enduring ſubſtance and treaſure in the heavens, "where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break thro' nor ſteal." The inordinate love of riches is abſolutely inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſobriety. There is hardly any ſurer evidence of a ſordid and inſane mind than this: So far is it from being compatible with a truly ſober one.

It is not the deſign of theſe ſcriptural counſels and warnings reſpecting riches, that you ſhould have abſolutely no regard for them; much leſs, that you ſhould wholly neglect all worldly affairs, buſineſs and commerce, under a pretence of being heavenly-minded: A notion which ſome lazy people, and dreaming enthuſiaſts have eſpouſed; thinking to be ſubſiſted in idleneſs by the labor and alms of others. Wealth is the gift of God, and conſidered in ſcripture as one of thoſe worldly bleſſings, for which men ought to be thankful to the Father of lights. It is therefore, tho' a trial, yet a real good; and not to be abſolutely deſpiſed. In the poſſeſſion of a wiſe and good man, it may contribute not only to the comfort of his own life; but enable him to do much good in the world in divers ways, particularly in the honourable capacity of God's almoner to the poor: While fools, or wicked men, are often the more unhappy themſelves, and do hurt to others, by means of thoſe riches which they abuſe. Solomon recommends an honeſt induſtry, as the natural and appointed means of providing a comfortable livelihood; ſaying, "Go to the ant, thou ſluggard; conſider her ways, and be wiſe: Which having no guide, overſeer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the ſummer, and gathereth her food in the harveſt." The apoſtle Paul ſays, as from the Lord, that "if any will not work, neither ſhould they eat." There is much more to the ſame purpoſe in the new teſtament: And it would be a great perverſion of our Saviour's words—"Labor not for the meat that periſheth;"—"Take no thought for the morrow;"—and ſuch-like admonitions, to underſtand them as prohibiting that prudent care and diligence, in order to provide for ourſelves, and "that we may have to give to him that needeth," which are poſitively enjoined in many other parts of ſcripture.

The true ſenſe of ſcripture upon this head, is in general this: That tho' you ought to be induſtrious in ſome honeſt courſe of life, and to be thankful to God, if he beſtows riches upon you; yet you are always to regard this world, and the periſhing riches of it, in due ſubordination to the other, and to thoſe far greater and better things, which God has promiſed to them that love him:—That you ſhould not be immoderately ſet in the purſuit of riches, or gripe them too faſt when acquired, ſo as to with-hold your alms from the proper objects of it:—That you ſhould not truſt in them, but in the living God, who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy:"—That you ſhould make ſuch a wiſe and reaſonable uſe of them, as is agreeable both to nature, and to the will of God; and be ready to part with them at his call, in hope of a better and more enduring ſubſtance; even thoſe things that are "above, where Jeſus Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God." Neither are you to imagine yourſelves ſober-minded, as Chriſtians are obliged to be, till the temper of your minds is conformable to ſuch ſober maxims as theſe: For there is nothing in them that ſavours, in the leaſt degree, of *ſuperſtition* or *enthuſiaſm*; which are ſo far from being the characteriſtics of a ſober mind, that they are directly repugnant thereto. And this leads me to obſerve more particularly, in the laſt place, what was hinted in the former part of this diſcourſe, *viz.*

XVI. THAT all *enthuſiaſtic* notions, and *ſuperſtitious* practices, ſtand in oppoſition to chriſtian ſobriety; and ought to be guarded againſt. A ſober mind is not, ſurely, an inſane, fanciful, over-heated or raving one; but a ſound, compoſed and rational mind; a mind well-informed with the knowledge of God, and of true religion; and, upon rational principles, or proper grounds of conviction of the truth, excellency and importance of chriſtianity, firmly attached to it, as it was preached by Chriſt and his apoſtles. All enthuſiaſtic rants and conceits, all ſuperſtitious notions and practices; I mean, all ſuch as are warranted neither by reaſon, nor by the holy ſcriptures, are therefore repugnant to ſobriety.

THAT ſobriety of mind ought to be conſidered in oppoſition to all ſuch fancies, and religious madneſs, is very obvious from one paſſage of ſcripture at leaſt, directly in point. It is in the Acts of the apoſtles,† and was referred to before. We there find the apoſtle Paul giving a particular account of his converſion to the Faith of Chriſt, before King Agrippa, and Feſtus the governor; apologizing for himſelf, and ſpeaking of the truth and evidences of chriſtianity. "And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid "with a loud voice, Paul, thou art *beſide thyſelf*; "much learning doth make thee *mad*." Whether Feſtus ſpake ſincerely or ironically about the apoſtle's learning, is not at preſent material: It is evident that he thought him *now* diſordered in his mind, and a religious, raving enthuſiaſt. Upon which the apoſtle calmly and reſpectfully replied, "I am not *mad*, moſt noble Feſtus; but "ſpeak forth *the words of truth* and *ſoberneſs*." In which anſwer, you perceive that ſpeaking the words of "truth and ſoberneſs," ſtands in oppoſition to the reproachful charge as to his being "beſide himſelf" and "mad." One obvious remark upon this piece of hiſtory, is, that men of dark and depraved minds may *miſ-call* truth and ſoberneſs, madneſs: For ſuch men receive not the things of the ſpirit of God; which are fooliſhneſs and madneſs to them. This, however, does not in the leaſt invalidate, but rather confirms the other obſervation, that *real* enthuſiaſm, or religious madneſs, actually ſtands in oppoſition to true ſobriety of mind, how often ſoever one may be *miſtaken* for the other.

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† Chap. XXVI. 24, 25.

If therefore, you aſpire to be ſober-minded, you are always, and in all things, to be governed by right reaſon, truth, rational evidence, and the genuine doctrines and duties of chriſtianity; and to be upon your guard againſt all wild notions and conceits; all ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, whether in principle or in practice.—Tho' there have been times and places, wherein it ſeemed, by the preaching chiefly in vogue, to be an eſtabliſhed maxim, that people, and particularly the young, muſt be firſt put "beſide themſelves," and made "mad," by a furious application to their paſſions, with little or no ſolid inſtruction to their minds, in order to make them ſober! Yea, ſobriety of mind ſeems to have been thought by many, to conſiſt chiefly in an heated imagination, in wild, unſcriptural fancies, and in ſuch conſequential practices, both in reſpect of religion, and the affairs of common life, as are directly repugnant to all true ſobriety, or a ſound mind. And young people need to be particularly cautioned againſt theſe deluſions and infatuations; being, through inexperience, the warmth of their blood, and the ſtrength of their paſſions, peculiarly expoſed to them; eſpecially when recommended to them either by a very ſoft and delicate, or a tragical, boiſterous and outrageous addreſs.

Superstition and enthuſiaſm are not, indeed, commonly conſidered as *vicious*, or any ways *criminal* in their nature; but rather only as innocent human infirmities. But it is not eaſy to ſee, why they ſhould be treated with ſo much tenderneſs, except in ſome particular caſes, wherein they appear to have their origin in corporeal diſorders. When this is the caſe, the ſubjects of them are to be pitied, like other unhappy people under a total or partial diſtraction, ariſing from ſimilar diſorders in the animal frame. But ſuch caſes as theſe being excepted, they are real and great vices of the mind; I mean, where-ever they are found in a great degree. For they ſtrongly imply a criminal miſuſe of the underſtanding, and of the word of God; which, being rightly uſed, would effectually preſerve people from theſe errors and deluſions. A perſon that makes ſuch uſe of his reaſon, and of the holy ſcriptures, as he ought in duty to make, never did, never will, never can fall into the errors of a raving, wild enthuſiaſm; ſo contrary to all true ſobriety, and ſo fruitful of miſchief in the world. For all which miſchiefs the enthuſiaſt is as much accountable, as the drunkard, and the man whoſe anger has got the better of his reaſon, are for the diſorders and outrages committed by them reſpectively.

Enthusiasts are commonly full of pride, ſelf-conceit, wrath and bitterneſs. All their dreams and reveries are ſacred with them, all divine: And they who dare to contradict or diſpute them, are of conſequence hereticks, unconverted, wicked men, the enemies of God. Hence raſh judging and condemning: Hence fatal breaches in families, amongſt neighbours, in churches, in civil ſocieties: Hence envying and ſtrife, and every evil work. Enthuſiaſm is generally outrageous and cruel as the grave, under a pretence of zeal for religion and the glory of God. They who are poſſeſſed of this evil ſpirit in a great degree, commonly think they can neither ſay nor do too much againſt thoſe, upon whom, in the pride and naughtineſs of their hearts, they have waged war, as unorthodox enemies to the moſt High: Conceiting that by "killing them, they would do God ſervice." Almoſt all great enthuſiaſts evidently diſcover a diſpoſition to be perſecutors, and to deſtroy their oppoſers, if they dared, and had it in their power: Unhappily miſtaking a kind of poſſeſſion for *inſpiration*, and the loſs of humanity for the acquiſition of a *divine nature!*

Enthusiasm has, perhaps, been productive of as much evil in the world, as the moſt flagrant and acknowledged immoralities: Yea, it leads naturally and directly to ſuch immoralities; as was intimated before. It is directly the reverſe of "the wiſdom that is from above," in its nature and effects; tho' miſtaken for it. It is neither pure, nor peaceable, nor gentle, nor eaſy to be entreated; it is not full of mercy, or of any good fruits; it is not without partiality, nor without hypocriſy; neither are the fruits of righteouſneſs ſown in peace by enthuſiaſts, but the ſeeds of all unrighteouſneſs, in diviſions and diſcord. What dreadful confuſions and calamities enthuſiaſm has ſometimes occaſioned, nearly, if not quite to the overturning of kingdoms, is known to thoſe that are converſant in hiſtory. And let me add, that if our own country has divers times ſince the firſt ſettling of it, been the wretched theatre of ſuch-like diſorders and miſeries in a great degree, it will render my giving you a very particular caution againſt enthuſiaſm, the more expedient. Let me therefore, in the fear of God, and in friendſhip to you, warn you never to forget that you are reaſonable creatures. There is nothing, which is not founded in reaſon, truth and nature, and in the holy word of God, which is the higheſt reaſon, that in any meaſure deſerves the name of religion. You are always to make the holy ſcriptures the rule both of your faith and practice, exerciſing your beſt reaſon in diſcovering the true ſenſe thereof; never admitting any thing as religious truth or duty, but what is agreeable thereto; and let me add, giving your chief attention to the plain, indiſputable doctrines and duties of chriſtianity, which are certainly of the greateſt importance. The obſervation of theſe counſels will, by the bleſſing of God, be a ſufficient ſecurity to you againſt all enthuſiaſtic, ſuperſtitious notions and practices; ſo contrary to ſobriety of mind, and of ſuch fatal conſequence, as has been repreſented.

Thus, my beloved young brethren, I have particularly mentioned, and warned you againſt, ſome of the principal of thoſe follies and vices, thoſe ſinful exceſſes and irregularities, both in principle and practice, which ſtand in oppoſition to chriſtian ſobriety. An ugly, deformed picture, ſet by the ſide of a fair and beautiful one, ſerves as a foil thereto; making its beauty the more conſpicuous, and recommending it to the beſt advantage. It is therefore hoped that what has been ſaid of irreligion, folly and vice, in this and my laſt diſcourſe, will ſerve to illuſtrate and recommend to you that pure and undefiled religion, which was explained to you in ſome preceeding ones. If any of you have unhappily, heretofore, preferred vice to virtue, and impiety to godlineſs; it was doubtleſs, in part at leaſt, becauſe you did not clearly diſcern the real beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other. I have endeavoured to place them both in ſuch a light, that you can hardly help doing it now, unleſs the god of this world has ſadly blinded your eyes, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel ſhould appear to them. May He that at firſt ſaid, "Let there be light;" and at whoſe word it "ſhined out of darkneſs, ſhine into all your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt!"

I HAVE endeavoured faithfully, and in the plaineſt manner, by God's bleſſing concurring, to lead you to the knowledge and love of the truth, free from all human inventions, refinements, and commandments of men, whatſoever; in humble imitation of the holy apoſtle, who ſaid,—"Seeing "we have received this miniſtry—we faint not: "But have renounced the hidden things of diſ-

" honeſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifeſtation of the truth commending ourſelves " to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God."† If you are convinced in your own conſciences, as I doubt not but you are, that I have been recommending to you nothing but ſober truth, and ſober religion: If you are alſo perſwaded, that I have been warning you againſt nothing but what is contrary to ſound doctrine, and to chriſtian ſobriety, from a ſincere deſire of your eternal happineſs; then take heed how you reject theſe friendly counſels and warnings. For in ſuch a caſe, " he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God."—If you are wiſe, you will be wiſe for yourſelves; but if you ſcorn, you alone ſhall bear it!"

How you have lived in times paſt, is beſt known to God and to yourſelves. If I certainly knew that any of you had been often and groſly guilty of any of the crimes, which have been cenſured in this and the foregoing diſcourſe, as I do not; yet you may be aſſured, that I am ſo tenderly concerned for your reputation in this world, as well as for your happineſs in the next, that I ſhould not, without the greateſt reluctance, ſpeak of it by way of reproof and rebuke, in this public manner. However, if any of you are conſcious to yourſelves, that you have not hitherto walked according to the laws of chriſtian ſobriety; I muſt admoniſh you to repent of all your violations of them; and to bring forth fruits

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† 2 Cor. VI. 1, 2.

meet for repentance, by forſaking your paſt ſins, and living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly for the time to come; that ſo you may ſtand acquitted in the great day, inſtead of being "condemned with the world."

LET me, on the other hand, exhort thoſe of you that are already ſober-minded, to perſevere in well-doing; to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God—"Finally, "brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſo-"ever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are "juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever "things are lovely, whatſoever things are of "good report; if there be any virtue, if there "be any praiſe, think of theſe things. Thoſe "things which ye have both learned, and re-"ceived, and heard—do; and the God of peace "ſhall be with you."†

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† Eph. Chap. IV.

SERMON VI.

SERMON VI.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety by various Conſiderations, *viz.* (1.) Of the Reaſonableneſs thereof. (2.) Of their religious Education. (3.) Of the conſtant Goodneſs of God to them. (4.) Of his corrective Viſitations. (5.) Of their Vows and good Reſolutions in Times of Trouble. (6.) Of the inward Peace attending Sobriety. (7.) Of the Eſteem and Honor which it procures.

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TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

MY young brethren, in the firſt diſcourſe upon this ſubject, a variety of obſervations were made upon the text, by way of introduction to the main deſign.

IN the two next diſcourſes, the nature of chriſtian ſobriety was ſomewhat diſtinctly explained, and curſorily recommended to you.

In the two laſt diſcourſes, ſome of the many ſins, follies and criminal exceſſes which are contrary to ſobriety, were particularly mentioned to you; from all which you were warned to abſtain.

I have ſpoken of nothing as a truth to be believed, or a duty to be practiſed by you, as a branch of this ſobriety, without aſſigning ſome reaſon or reaſons for it, how briefly ſoever. Neither, on the other hand, has any thing been mentioned as repugnant to ſobriety, without offering ſomething to your conſideration, by way of diſſwaſive from it. So that I have, in effect, been exhorting you to be ſober-minded, while my profeſſed deſign was rather only to explain what is intended thereby, and to ſhew you what is inconſiſtent therewith. But it has been my intention all along, by the will of God,

Thirdly, More largely and diſtinctly to exhort you to this ſobriety of mind, and to diſſwade you from the contrary.

I shall, accordingly, now proceed to this branch of my deſign, by laying before you ſuch conſiderations and arguments of various kinds, as may be effectual to perſwade you to be ſober-minded, by the bleſſing of God concurring; or elſe, if they are diſregarded, will leave you the more inexcuſeable. Which I pray God, may not be the caſe with any of you: Though if it ſhould, it will be nothing that is unuſual;—nothing but what often happened of old, under the preaching of the apoſtles themſelves, who were ſo eminently faithful to God, and to the ſouls of men. Conſcious of this fidelity, they left the *event*, the *ſucceſs* of their labour of love, with God; in full aſſurance of his gracious approbation, whatever *that* might be. Whether their hearers received and reliſhed the word preached, to their ſalvation, or diſreliſhed and rejected it, to their deſtruction; yet they knew their own conduct with reſpect to both, would be acceptable to God, who is pleaſed with the faithfulneſs of his ſervants, whether ſucceſsful or not. Theſe are the ſentiments, which one of the chief of the apoſtles expreſſes in the following words: "We "are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them "that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To "the one we are the ſavour of death unto "death; and to the other the ſavour of life "unto life—For we are not as many which "corrupt the word of God; but as of ſincerity, "but as of God, ſo ſpeak we in Chriſt." †

LET me briefly premiſe a few things here, before I proceed to the propoſed exhortation. And,

1. AN exhortation to ſobriety, implies the uſe of argument, of ſober and ſolid reaſons, addeſſed to the underſtanding. General counſels, or loud, pathetic exclamations, addreſſed ſolely to the paſſions; or merely calling upon people to be ſober-minded, without ſuch intelligible motives as are adapted to influence a reaſonable mind, does not deſerve the name of chriſtian exhortation: It is but empty harrangue and declamation; from which no good and laſting effects can be expected, how much ſoever perſons may be moved and agitated thereby for a time. I ſhall therefore conſider you as reaſonable creatures; and

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† 2 Cor. Ch. II.

make uſe of ſuch arguments and conſiderations, as are adapted to work upon a rational mind.

2. THESE arguments will be of a general nature; reſpecting ſobriety of mind in that large, comprehenſive ſenſe, in which it was explained in the preceeding diſcourſes, rather than any ſingle branches of it. For the particular parts or branches thereof, have had ſo much ſaid upon them reſpectively already, that it is the leſs neceſſary to inſiſt upon them now. And it will be more expedient and uſeful, to urge upon you ſobriety of mind in general, conſidered as containing all thoſe particulars that have been ſeparately ſpoken of.

3. THO' ſome of theſe arguments will be of leſs weight than others; yet none of them, it is hoped, will be unworthy to be mentioned in a grave diſcourſe, or undeſerving of your regard. There is nothing of any real weight, that can be ſaid upon this ſubject, but what may properly claim attention, in proportion to that weight. And it muſt needs be, that in a great number of arguments for ſobriety, there muſt be a differrence in reſpect of their importance: They cannot all be of the ſame, or equal force; tho' they may all be according to truth, nature, reaſon and ſcripture. Some of thoſe which I ſhall offer to your conſideration, are, I think, as weighty as the heart of man can conceive; and none of them, I hope, ſuperficial, fanciful or unſolid. But you ſhall judge of them yourſelves: For, I neither claim nor deſire a blind, implicit deference to any thing which I ſay, even

from the young; but aim at giving you rational conviction: Without which there can be no religion, whether in principle or practice, becoming reaſonable creatures; nor, conſequently, any thing that deſerves the name of chriſtian ſobriety, either in the young or the old.

4. THESE arguments will have a primary reſpect to thoſe perſons, that are not yet ſober-minded; being deſigned and adapted both to awaken and to encourage ſuch; to ſhew them, on one hand, the fatal conſequences of perſevering in their ſinful courſes; and on the other, the reaſonableneſs, and many advantages of ſobriety. But,

5. THO' the following conſiderations will be chiefly adapted to the ſtate of the vicious; yet they may be of uſe to all thoſe perſons, whether old or young, that are already ſober-minded; by confirming them in the faith and practice of religion; by encouraging them to "go on unto perfection;" and ſhewing them the danger, either of a total or partial decline from "the right ways of the Lord." It is hoped, there are ſome of the young amongſt us, that are truly ſober-minded; who may yet greatly need encouragement and confirmation in the faith, and in the continued practice of their duty. Neither would I have it ſuppoſed, that I conclude there are none ſuch, becauſe I addreſs myſelf more eſpecially to thoſe unhappy young men that are, or may be, of a contrary character.

THESE things being premiſed, my young brethren, what I would firſt of all propoſe to your conſideration, is,

I. THAT this ſobriety, conſidered in one entire view as it has been explained, is a moſt *reaſonable* thing. Reaſon is a noble prerogative which God has given you; whereby you are diſtinguiſhed from the fowls of heaven, and from the beaſt of the field; from the horſe and mule which have no underſtanding. It ſhould, therefore, be your ambition, an ambition truly laudable, to act up to your rational character in all reſpects; and never to degrade or diſhonor yourſelves, by a conduct repugnant thereto. This, in general, you will all readily acknowledge. And, to apply it to the grand point in view; what is there,—what can there be, ſo reaſonable, as that you ſhould be ſober-minded, or truly religious? This is the ſum of human reaſon, of human wiſdom, reduced to practice: For which cauſe, in the writings of Solomon, wiſdom is only another name for religion, or ſobriety; and folly, only another name for irreligion and vice. There is nothing that deſerves the title of wiſdom, in compariſon of the former, which ſo much excels every thing elſe that paſſes under the ſame name;—nothing which deſerves the title of folly, in compariſon of the latter, which ſo much ſurpaſſeth all other folly. So the wiſe man explains himſelf, when he ſays, "the fooliſhneſs of fools is folly;" i. e. the folly of irreligious, wicked men, is emphatically folly, the greateſt that can be conceived of: All other folly is a kind of wiſdom, in compariſon of this. On the other hand, all other pretended wiſdom is but folly, in compariſon of knowing God and keeping his commandments.

NONE, certainly, but a fool, can ſay in his heart, "There is no God." And if there be a God, the Creator and Lord of all, perfect in power, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, &c. is it not evidently a moſt reaſonable thing to love, reverence, honor, truſt in and obey him, even with all the heart, ſoul, ſtrength and mind? What greater folly, what ſurer mark of inſanity can there poſſibly be, than to contemn or diſregard, to affront and diſobey the only living and true God? Will you abuſe language ſo much, as to call any One that does ſo, a reaſonable and wiſe man! Moreover: If Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, came into this world to enlighten, to redeem and ſave it, according to the ſcripture-account, of which there is rational, concluſive, abundant evidence; then, certainly, you are bound in reaſon to believe in him; to reſpect and honor him in the high relation of a "mediator between God and men;" to ſubmit yourſelves to his teaching and authority, to believe his words, to truſt in him, and to obey all the laws of his kingdom, or the commandments of God as promulgated by him, in the name, and by the authority of the Father. What can be more, I will not now ſay, wicked and impious, but more irrational and fooliſh, than either to reject thoſe many "infallible proofs," which there are of Chriſt's divine miſſion, and the truth of his goſpel, or to deſpiſe him, and to diſobey his commandments, which are ſo holy juſt and good?

THERE are, comparatively ſpeaking, but few things required of you as duties, in and by the goſpel, but what even the light of nature ſhews to be ſuch; but few things forbidden as ſinful thereby, but what even your own reaſon and conſciences might tell you, are wrong and criminal. This is true of all the moral precepts and prohibitions of the goſpel; which are far the greater part. The reaſonableneſs of theſe, conſidered in their own nature, independently of any revelation, is obvious to thoſe who will duly attend to them.

As to the other commandments of the goſpel, which do not belong to the head of moral precepts; the things required or forbidden in them, are moſtly ſuch as have a cloſe and immediate connexion with the truth of Chriſtianity ſpeculatively conſidered; or with the doctrine concerning Jeſus Chriſt, the redemption of the world by him, his reſurrection, aſcenſion into heaven, the power committed to him by the Father, and his future coming in glory to judge the world. So that if this ſcriptural account of things is true, as it moſt certainly is, the reaſonableneſs and fitneſs of what is required in the goſpel in conſequence of, and as grounded upon them, is plain and undeniable. If there are any exceptions, they muſt be thoſe two poſitive inſtitutions of the goſpel, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. For as to public ſocial worſhip in general; the reaſonableneſs thereof has been acknowledged by all civilized nations;

tions: None but an athieſt, or mere ſavage, can even doubt the propriety of it. And as to thoſe two poſitive precepts; to ſay the leaſt, there is nothing abſurd, nothing irrational in them. Nay, there is an apparent propriety in them, when conſidered with relation to their known, declared ends: One of them, baptiſm, as a viſible ſign of our dedication to God in Chriſt, and both an emblem and means of that death to ſin, of that newneſs of life, and that moral purity, to which we are called by the goſpel, "thro' ſanctification of the ſpirit unto obedience;" from whence it is called, in this epiſtle to Titus, "the waſhing of regeneration," and joined with the "renewing of the Holy Ghoſt."† The other of theſe inſtitutions, the Lord's Supper, is a commemorative rite of that moſt wonderful and intereſting event, the death of the Son of God upon the croſs, in human fleſh, for the ſalvation of ſinful men: And it is, at the ſame time, a natural memento, both of the grace of God to us, and of the obligations which we are under to love and obey him. The Lord's Supper, being conſidered in this ſcriptural light, is evidently a very decent, proper and reaſonable inſtitution; adapted, in its nature, to anſwer the moſt excellent moral ends; ſuch ends as all but athieſts muſt acknowledge to be important; i. e. if gratitude and love to God, righteouſneſs, charity, purity, and univerſal holineſs, are of any importance.

It appears then, my young brethren, That that ſobriety of mind to which you are exhorted, conſiſting in a due regard to God, to JeſusChriſt, and to the divine commandments, according to the faith and requiſitions of the goſpel, is, in the whole of it, highly reaſonable; the moſt rational thing in the world. I would not, on any account, exhort you to do what is unreaſonable in the leaſt degree; either to believe things without proper evidence of their truth, or to act abſurdly and irrationally in any other reſpect. To believe God's word and to keep it, is, ſurely, neither of theſe. There is abundant proof of whatſoever you are exhorted to receive as religious truth: And that pious, holy and virtuous life, to which you are called, is the moſt fit, decent and rational life, that any man on earth can lead. Neither can you reject the goſpel, or live a life of impiety, ſin and vice, without contradicting, in the moſt diſgraceful, the moſt diſhonorable manner, that reaſon which God has given you, and on which you may juſtly value yourſelves. I ſhall therefore cloſe this head of exhortation, with the words of the apoſtle Paul: "I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your REASONABLE SERVICE." †

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† Chap. III. 5.

II. THE far greater part of you, if not all, have, thro' the goodneſs of God, been favoured with a virtuous and religious *education*. You have, even from your childhood, been inſtructed in the great and fundamental principles of religion,

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† Rom. XII. 1.

ligion, both natural and revealed. I might ſay to you as the apoſtle did to Timothy, then a young man, that "from children "you have known the holy ſcriptures, which "are able to make you WISE unto ſalvation, "through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus;"— thoſe ſcriptures which, having been given by inſpiration of God, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that you might be perfect, and throughly furniſhed unto all good works. Having been dedicated to God in your baptiſm, you were early taught to read theſe inſtructive, ſacred pages, according to the laudable practice of this country; receiving at once, or together, the firſt leſſons of piety and of human literature. You have alſo, probably, often heard the ſacred oracles read in the families in which you were brought up, in the ſchools which you frequented, and in the houſe of God. You have had the principal doctrines and duties pertaining to godly ſobriety, often inculcated upon you by your parents, your ſchool-maſters and your miniſters, in private and in public. You have had "line "upon line, and precept upon precept." I may add, that many of you at leaſt, have had virtuous and good examples ſet before you;— examples of godlineſs and chriſtian ſobriety, in the families in which you were brought up.

Now theſe are great favours in providence, by which you are laid under ſome ſpecial obligations to be ſober-minded, in addition to

thoſe

thoſe which ariſe from the reaſonableneſs of the thing itſelf, in its own nature. Your guilt will of conſequence be greatly aggravated, if you ſhould not know God and Jeſus Chriſt; if you ſhould not remember your Creator, honor, love and obey him, after having been thus inſtructed, admoniſhed, and trained up in the way that you ſhould go, from your early childhood. Thoſe unhappy perſons who were born and brought up in places, where the light of the goſpel does not ſhine, or at beſt ſhines but with faint, broken, and juſt-glimmering rays;—where they have had far leſs and fewer advantages for knowing and doing their duty, than you have enjoyed; (which is the caſe of much the greater part of the young men now in the chriſtian world:) Such perſons as theſe, I ſay, though really inexcuſable if they are not ſober-minded, are yet far leſs criminal, leſs culpable in the ſight of God and man, than you will be, ſhould you continue in the practice of vice and folly, after having enjoyed theſe ſuperior religious advantages. I pretend to no peculiar ſagacity or penetration: But I know ſo much of the human heart, and the power of natural conſcience, that I ſcruple not to ſay poſitively, That that faithful witneſs for God which is in you, teſtifies to the truth and juſtice of what I here ſay, if you lend me ſo much of your attention, as barely to underſtand it.

You know, my beloved young brethren, and cannot but know, that you are laid under peculiar, and very ſtrong obligations to ſobriety, by the advantages of your birth, childhood and youth, before-mentioned; and that your guilt will be proportionably aggravated in the ſight of God, to whom all hearts are open, and by whom all actions, with their particular circumſtances, are weighed in an equal ballance, if inſtead of being ſober-minded, you ſhould perſevere in vice and impiety. Let me therefore exhort you ſeriouſly to conſider of this matter; not only while you are here preſent before God, but after you are gone from his houſe. If you duly reflect upon theſe privileges of your birth and education, and having the things which belong to your peace, ſo early and frequently inculcated upon you; it cannot but have ſome good influence upon your minds, and future behaviour. And, for your warning not to contemn and diſregard theſe things, let me remind you of the ſad and ſhameful confeſſion of a fooliſh, heedleſs and obſtinate young man; with which I cloſe the preſent argument. It runs thus: "How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof? and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that inſtructed me! †"

III. If you reflect upon the goodneſs of God to you in your *daily preſervation*, or in the courſe of his *common providence*; this will

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† Prov. Chap. IV.

have a tendency to make you ſober-minded. The goodneſs of God, even in this view of it, ought to lead you to repentance; which is the principal end thereof. Ever ſince you were ſo fearfully and wonderfully made by him in the womb, and from your birth to the preſent time, you have been caſt upon him as your guardian, your ſupport, your friend, your Father. He has daily loaded you with his benefits, and crowned you with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies. How numerous are the bleſſings which he hath beſtowed upon you? From how many evils and dangers has he delivered you, during your feeble infant ſtate, in childhood, and in your riper years?

Now, God having thus protected, nouriſhed and brought you up as children; may not heaven and earth well be aſtoniſhed, if you continue to "rebel againſt him," inſtead of making him that return of gratitude, love and obedience, which is ſo juſtly required of you! This is a plain and very forcible argument: Nor can it fail to have great weight in your minds, if there is any gratitude and ingenuity in them. But as this is a very common argument, I will not enlarge upon it; but cloſe it by reminding you of a ſolemn expoſtulation of the apoſtle, relative to the point— "Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, "forbearance and long-ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee "to repentance? But after thy hardneſs and

" impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy " ſelf wrath, againſt the day of wrath—!"‡

IV. NOTWITHSTANDING the goodneſs and kindneſs of God to you, in the common courſe of his providence, it is likely that he has often *reproved*, *warned* and *corrected* you, by the viſitations of that ſame wiſe and good providence ;—by ſickneſs, by the death of parents, or near relations, friends and companions ; or by other afflictive and grievous diſpenſations. Now all theſe things are to be conſidered as kind chaſtenings and admonitions to you ; deſigned in providence to awaken you to ſerious reflexion, and as one means of begetting in you that true wiſdom and ſobriety, to which you are exhorted. And will you " deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord ? " This were, in ſome reſpects, an evidence of greater ſtubborneſs and hardneſs of heart, than deſpiſing the more obvious effects of his goodneſs : I ſay, the *more obvious* effects of it ; becauſe theſe are as *truly* the effects of divine goodneſs, as any known and acknowledged bleſſings. You have had fathers of your fleſh, to whom you gave reverence when they corrected you : Should you not much rather give reverence, and be in ſubjection to the Father of your ſpirits, under his correcting hand, that you may live ? They, poſſibly, ſometimes corrected you after their own pleaſure, to gratify a ſudden, tranſient reſentment, rather than with a truly parental kindneſs, that

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‡ Rom. Ch. II.

that you might become the wiſer and happier thereby. But when God corrects his children, his offspring, it is always kindly meant for their profit; that they may be taught to fear and obey him; that they may become partakers of his holineſs, and made wiſe unto ſalvation.

How highly culpable will you then be, if you refuſe to "hear the rod and him that appointed it?"—if you deſpiſe, not only the goodneſs of God in the common preſervation and bounties of his providence, but in the corrective viſitations of it; and will not learn righteouſneſs and ſobriety thereby; but go on hardening your hearts againſt the fear of the Almighty! Let me cloſe this head of exhortation therefore, with the words of Solomon—"He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.†"

V. It is probable that moſt, or all of you, in certain *ſeaſons* of *danger* and *diſtreſs*, when you apprehended death was not far from you, have had your conſciences greatly alarmed. On theſe occaſions your fooliſh and ſinful courſes have probably been brought to your remembrance, ſo as to fill you with anxiety and guilty fears. At theſe times you have doubtleſs had your hearts and eyes turned to God, if you dared to look up to him, in importunate deſires and prayers for mercy and preſervation; accompanied with ſecret *promiſes*

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† Prov. XXIX. 1.

miſes and ſolemn *vows* of amendment, and of devoting yourſelves to the ſervice of God, if you might be ſpared a while longer. I believe there are, comparatively, but few perſons, old or young, eſpecially amongſt thoſe who have been religiouſly educated, but what have had experience of ſuch ſeaſons of diſtreſs, awakening and fear; and of ſuch workings of conſcience, ſuch vows and good reſolutions at thoſe times.

For example: People are generally thus alarmed in times of contagious and mortal ſickneſs; when they ſee their friends and acquaintance carried away "as with a flood," and eſpecially when they themſelves are, by ſickneſs, brought "nigh unto death." Such reflections as the above-mentioned, are uſually awakened in vicious perſons, on theſe occaſions. They that are, by their office, called often to the beds of the ſick, as their adviſers and comforters, have frequent opportunities, without being *inquiſitive*, to be informed of their true ſentiments in theſe ſerious hours. And the ſentiments uſually expreſſed at ſuch times by wicked men, and not uncommonly even by the good, correſpond to thoſe words of the pſalmiſt in his ſickneſs:—"Surely, every man is vanity.—Hear my "prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry, "hold not thy peace from my tears—O ſpare "me, that I may recover ſtrength, before I "go hence, and be no more." They alſo that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs on the mighty waters, and are acquainted with the perils attending that way of life, know the fears and diſtreſſes often occaſioned thereby. They are deſcribed in one of the pſalms, thus —"The Lord commandeth, and raiſeth up the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves—They mount up to the heavens, they go down to the depths ; their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble—and they are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble."—There are ſometimes alſo ſtorms, tempeſts and perils by land, as well as on the ſeas, at which moſt people are greatly alarmed ; and have their thoughts and deſires turned for a time, towards God and religion, in prayers, vows and pious reſolutions. Earthquakes are almoſt univerſally terrifying ; and we all in general know the ſentiments of people on theſe occaſions, by repeated obſervation and experience. There are alſo the dangers of war ; and many others, which are common in the courſe of human life. On all which occaſions, the generality of people are in a degree of perturbation and fear ; imploring the divine preſervation, and making ſuch-like promiſes and reſolutions as have been mentioned.

Now, let me aſk you ſeveral ſerious queſtions, my young brethren, relative to theſe times of danger, fear and anxiety. In the firſt place then, have you not had experience of ſuch ſeaſons yourſelves ?—if not of all, yet at leaſt of ſome of them ? And were not your ſentiments on theſe occaſions, ſuch in general as have been mentioned? Were not your conſciences troubled within you? Did you not greatly fear death, and the conſequences of it? Did you not, at leaſt ſilently, implore God's ſparing mercy, with vows of eternal gratitude and obedience to him? Taking this for granted, let me aſk again; Muſt you not even now acknowledge, that thoſe were reaſonable reflexions; and that, in general, you had juſt cauſe for them? Were they not the reſult, the dictates of nature, and of ſound reaſon, tho' not the effect of long premeditation? Or do you now conſider them all as weak, childiſh fancies, and ſuperſtitious imaginations? You cannot think them ſo, unleſs you ſuppoſe that all thoughts of God, religion, virtue and vice, and of future rewards and puniſhments, are alſo childiſh, ſuperſtitious fancies. I have too good an opinion of you, to ſuſpect the latter; and muſt therefore conclude, that you ſuppoſe you had ſome proper ground for ſuch apprehenſions as thoſe mentioned. Let me then aſk you again, Whether God was not kind and gracious to you, in hearing your cries at thoſe times, and ſaving you from theſe dangers? Have not many of you reaſon to think, that if you had then been taken out of this world, according to your fears, you would now have been miſerable in another? And do you not think, that you ought forever to bear in remembrance, both thoſe perils, and theſe mercies and deliverances; together with your vows and good reſolutions, ſo as to fulfil them, by living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in the world? If you ſhould forget or break theſe promiſes and vows, or continue to live unmindful of God and your duty, would not this be a great aggravation of your guilt? Or, tho' you ſhould be thus forgetful and ungrateful; yet do you not ſuppoſe that God remembers theſe things, to call you to an account another day? And if he ſhould do ſo, what excuſe, what apology, what tolerable plea could you make for yourſelves?

These, my young brethren, are indeed ſerious queſtions; but they are not ſuperſtitious or fanciful ones: Neither can they be thought ſo by any, excepting thoſe who are ſo hardened in infidelity and vice, as to conceit that every thing which is grave and ſerious, or which ſuppoſes the truth of religion, ought to be diſcarded under the name of ſuperſtition — Know then, that your vows and promiſes are upon record in heaven! Be aſſured alſo, that your ſinful and ungrateful violations of them are ſo likewiſe; and will never be eraſed without repentance and reformation, — except, perhaps, when your "names are blotted out of the book of life," and "from under heaven!" O then, forget not the day of your calamity; forget not your vows; forget not the ſparing mercy of God to you; leſt another time of diſtreſs and anguiſh ſhould come upon you even "as a whirlwind ;" when tho' you ſhall call upon him, he will not anſwer !—I ſhall cloſe this head of exhortation,by reminding you of the conduct of the royal pſalmiſt ; his grateful remembrance of God's favors in times of trouble, and of his own vows therein : An example worthy of your ſober attention and imitation—" The ſorrows of death compaſſed me," ſays he, " and the pains of hell gat hold upon me : I found trouble and ſorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord—O Lord, I beſeech thee deliver my ſoul ! Gracious is the Lord, and righteous ; yea, our God is merciful—I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul ; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears,and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living—I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the preſence of all his people." And again, in another pſalm : " I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath ſpoken when I was in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt-ſacrifices," &c.

VI. THE *peace* of *your own minds*, which is far more deſirable than any earthly enjoyments, eſſentially depends upon the ſobriety of them ; or, in other words, it depends upon your being truly wiſe and virtuous, and living ſuch an holy, reaſonable life as I am recommending to you. There is no other life agreeable to the ſuperior, and moſt excellent part of human nature; none that yields ſuch ſolid ſatisfaction to the *mind*, — the principal, the only ſeat of *rational happineſs*. Any other kind of life, i. e. any ſinful, profligate one, muſt be unhappy, becauſe irrational; becauſe it is contrary to the light and dictates of the mind, or to natural conſcience. Pride, envy, malice, covetouſneſs, and all other vicious paſſions, are in their own nature deſtructive of human felicity: They at once pollute, poiſon and torment the ſoul. And beſides: No man, unleſs you ſuppoſe him a right down atheiſt, ſuch an one as is hardly to be found in the world, or a perſon quite ſtupified and abandoned, can lead an impious, vicious life, without being ſelf-condemned;-- without having his own reaſon and conſcience againſt him, and being, ſometimes at leaſt, under apprehenſions of the juſt and awful diſpleaſure of the Almighty. All men in general, eſpecially thoſe that have been educated in the belief of the chriſtian revelation, have their ſerious hours;—their times of reflexion, in which they cannot, if they would, avoid thinking of God and their own ways; of their duty, and what the habitual violation of it muſt terminate in at laſt. No man can live always in a frolick; or in ſuch an uninterrupted courſe, either of worldly buſineſs, or of pleaſures and amuſements, that grave and ſerious thoughts will not at times force themſelves upon him. And whenever they do ſo, then the wicked man knows, and feels himſelf to be, what he actually is, a wretch ; a ſelf-accuſed, ſelf-condemned criminal, preſaging in his conſcience, a light which " lighteneth every man that cometh into the world," his future condemnation at an higher tribunal. So that even in the midſt of jollity, laughter and criminal indulgences, the heart of ſuch men is often ſorrowful, whether you a ſee ſudden gloom appearing upon their faces, or not. How wretched are they then, at other times!

CONSIDER then,the unhappy ſtate of ſuch a man ; of One, whoſe only refuge from conſcious ſhame and diſhonor, from guilty fears and anxiety, is in buſineſs, diverſions or ſleep ;—in flying from thought, in flying as it were from himſelf ! Which yet he cannot always do ſo effectually, but that trouble will purſue him from buſineſs to the banquet, to places of riot and guilty pleaſure : Nor will it leave even his ſleep unmoleſted. For when he ſaith, " My bed ſhall comfort me, my couch ſhall eaſe my complaint ; " then he is " ſcared with dreams, and terrified with viſions. " ‡ But conſider, more eſpecially, the miſerable condition of ſuch a man in times of adverſity and danger ; ſuch as were ſpoken of under the preceding head : When he is forced more directly upon ſerious reflexions on life and death, on another world, and a judgment to come. Where is then his refuge, his ſupport, his confidence and " ſtrong tower " ? At theſe times he can no longer

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‡ Job. Chap. VII.

cheat and delude himſelf by buſineſs or diverſions, into an imaginary happineſs: The fool's paradiſe then vaniſheth quite away. Shall he therefore, when he is no longer permitted to enjoy this, conſole himſelf with the thoughts of God and his providence; and, "in the multitude of his thoughts within him," have his "ſoul delighted with theſe divine comforts"? Alas! theſe reflexions are commonly the moſt diſpiriting, the moſt gloomy and tormenting of any, to a wicked man in adverſity; they are themſelves the principal ſource of his diſtreſs. So that putting wicked men upon ſuch a method to get comfort, is much like comforting a ſelf-condemned malefactor in priſon, by reminding him of his approaching trial, and the equity of his judge! When Paul preached of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come, the guilty Fælix, even in the height of his proſperity and glory, trembled on his tribunal before his poor priſoner. This ſhews the great power of natural conſcience; and, how truly wretched and miſerable thoſe perſons are, who live in the practice of known ſin and vice, whatever pains they may take, and how artful ſoever they may be to diſguiſe it. So that theſe obſervations of the prophet, are founded in nature and experience, and are maxims of eternal truth—"The wicked are like the troubled "ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt "up mire and dirt. There is no peace, ſaith "my God, to the wicked!"

CONSIDER now, on the other hand, the inward peace and happineſs, which naturally attend ſobriety, or the belief and practice of true religion, according to the "glorious goſpel of the bleſſedGod." A ſincere chriſtian's reaſon and conſcience are his friends and advocates; approving and juſtifying his general courſe of life to himſelf. He has the teſtimony of a good conſcience; and the conſequence hereof is, that he conſiders God himſelf as his friend. For "if our own heart condemn us not," ſays the apoſtle John, "then have we confidence towards God." And the apoſtle Paul, "Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world." The ſincere believer, or real chriſtian, has "ſtrong conſolation," even "all joy and peace in believing." His hopes, like the wiſe man's houſe, are founded upon a rock, the "rock of ages;" and will not be *beaten down* by all the rains and floods, the winds and ſtorms of adverſity; tho' they may ſometimes be *ſhaken.*

SUCH hope in God, as is the natural conſequence of a ſober mind reſting itſelf on the divine promiſes; or, of pure and undefiled religion: Such hope in God, I ſay, at once heightens all the joyful ſcenes and occurents of human life, and brightens every gloomy one. Great peace have they that love,—that ſincerely love the law of God, and nothing ſhall offend them : " The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance forever." Be aſſured that our bleſſed Saviour did not delude or amuſe his diſciples with a fallacious promiſe, and the expectation of an imaginary, fanciful or unſolid happineſs, when he ſaid, " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And again : " If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever ; even the Spirit of truth—I will not leave you comfortleſs,."—Theſe promiſes like him that made them, are faithful and true : And whoever will make the experiment, by an hearty, unreſerved dedication of himſelf to the ſervice of God in Chriſt, ſhall find them ſo ; altho' it once appeared a myſtery even to one of the apoſtles, " how our Lord would manifeſt himſelf to them, and not unto the world. " * Though a ſtedfaſt adherence to the doctrines and precepts of Chriſt, in oppoſition either to Paganniſm, Judaiſm, or the Antichriſtian corrupters of the goſpel, may ſometimes be the occaſion of outward trials and afflictions ; yet thoſe who have had the honeſty and fortitude of mind to ſtand theſe trials, have, in no time or age, found themſelves forſaken of God : But could ſay

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* John XIV. 22.

ſay experimentally with the great apoſtle—"Bleſ-
"ſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus
"Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and the God of
"all comfort; who comforteth us in all our
"tribulation—For as the ſufferings of Chriſt
"abound in us, ſo our conſolation aboundeth
"by Chriſt." †

LET me therefore exhort you to be ſober-minded, by theſe very weighty conſiderations: That this is the way to enjoy true peace of mind, and a ſubſtantial happineſs in this world, whatever croſſes, diſappointments and outward afflictions you may meet with: And, on the other hand, that if you continue in the practice of folly and wickedneſs, you will be full of diſquietude within, and truly wretched whenever you dare to reflect on your ſtate, whatever outward proſperity may attend you. I will accordingly cloſe this head of argument, by reminding you of the words of the royal pſalmiſt—"There be many
"that ſay, who will ſhew us any good? Lord,
"lift thou up the light of thy countenance up-
"on us. Thou haſt put gladneſs into my heart,
"more than in the time that their corn and their
"wine increaſed. I will both lay me down in
"peace, and ſleep: For thou, Lord, only makeſt
"me dwell in ſafety."‡

VII. As by being ſober-minded, or truly religious, you will beſt ſecure inward peace and comfort; ſo you will alſo beſt conſult your *credit* and *reputation in the world*; at leaſt in the opinion of thoſe, whoſe judgment is moſt worthy of

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† 2 Cor. I. 3, 4, 5. ‡ Pſalm IV. End.

regard: I mean, all truly wiſe and good men; all who are of a ſound mind themſelves. "The righteous is more excellent," and therefore more honourable alſo, "than his [unrighteous] neighbour:" He is ſo in reaſon and nature; he is ſo likewiſe in the eſtimation of all reaſonable and good men. For it is one characteriſtic of a citizen of Zion, that "in his eyes a vile [or wicked] perſon is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord."

THIS is not, indeed, an argument of ſo great weight, as thoſe which have been mentioned before, and as others which are to be mentioned hereafter: And people, as is well known, may be far too deſirous of "that honor that cometh from men." But yet this is in itſelf a rational motive, and often uſed as ſuch in the holy ſcriptures. You ought, doubtleſs, to have ſome concern for your reputation amongſt men, tho' always in ſubordination to the "honor that cometh from God." For "a good name is better than precious ointment." This is of real importance to all men in general, and particularly to young men juſt ſetting out in the world. Their preſent intereſt depends very much, and ſometimes chiefly, upon their character. A young man who has no ſenſe of ſhame, or no regard for his own honor and reputation, is in a fair way, not only for univerſal contempt, but ruin. And, as was ſaid before, ſobriety of mind and manners is, according to the eſtabliſhed courſe of things, the moſt effectual means of ſecuring a good name amongſt men.

BUT you will ſay, perhaps, "However excellent a thing religion may be in itſelf; however worthy of honor, and how much ſoever ſome perſons may extol it; yet the greater part of mankind, and thoſe with whom One muſt be chiefly concerned, are fooliſh and vicious. They do not eſteem a perſon the more, ſome of them the leſs, on account of his ſobriety. Many will rather ridicule and ſcoff at him, than honor, ſpeak well of or befriend him, for his religion and virtue." To ſtrengthen your objection againſt my preſent argument, you may poſſibly add, "That even ſome kings, governors and governments, after iſſuing proclamations for the encouragement of piety and virtue, with aſſurances of ſhewing the moſt countenance, and giving the preference to thoſe perſons, who ſhould be found to practiſe them; and of diſcountenancing thoſe of a contrary character, have, in many inſtances, notoriouſly diſappointed the public expectation by a contrary conduct; by courting, careſſing and preferring the moſt vicious, worthleſs and ſordid, and frowning upon, or at beſt neglecting, men of known virtue and ſobriety."

THIS is a pretty heavy charge upon the world: But as it naturally occurs by way of objection to what was before aſſerted, I ſhall conſider, and endeavour to invalidate it, as far as is conſiſtent with truth and juſtice, or, without "ſpeaking wickedly for God." The following obſervations, I imagine, will ſhew that this objection has much leſs weight in it than you may think; and leaves my argument all the force that it was ſuppoſed to have.

1. It muſt be allowed that piety and virtue are far from being honoured ſo much in the world, as they ought in reaſon to be. But put the matter upon the worſt ſuppoſition that can be made:—Suppoſe that thoſe who honor religion in their hearts, or think the better of the virtuous and ſober for being ſo, are very few in compariſon of thoſe who inwardly deſpiſe both: Yet, upon this moſt unfavourable ſuppoſition, let me aſk, Which is the moſt to be deſired, the approbation and eſteem of the *few wiſe* and *knowing*, who judge of things according to nature, truth and propriety; or that of a vaſt *multitude* of *fools* and *madmen*, who are really ignorant what true worth, excellency and honor conſiſt in? If you were painters, ſtatuaries or architects; if you were poets, muſicians or orators; and not riches, but reputation was your principal end, would you not be ambitious of pleaſing the beſt judges, the greateſt maſters in theſe noble arts, rather than vaſt ignorant multitudes, who had neither ſkill, taſte nor judgment in them? And ſo in all other arts and profeſſions, if you had a view to reputation only, not gain? Doubtleſs you would. The application of this to the point in hand, is eaſy. If there were but three, two, nay, but one wiſe and good man in the world; but one who diſtinguiſhed rightly betwixt perſons or characters, and honoured virtue and ſobriety, you ought in reaſon to covet the approbation and eſteem of that one man, more than

that of the whole ignorant and wicked world beſide: Eſpecially when you reflect, that his judgment is ratified in heaven, by Him that has ſaid, "Them that honor me, I will honor; and they "that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed." But,

2. THE ſuppoſition here made, is very injurious to the world. For there are great numbers of people in all chriſtian and proteſtant countries, and particularly in our own, who are ſincere lovers of virtue and religion; and who accordingly eſteem thoſe that practiſe them, far more than they do the vicious, profane and diſſolute. The proportion which the good bear to others, in point of number, cannot be determined: But, that it is very conſiderable, cannot be denied without great uncharitableneſs. And if you are ſober-minded, you may depend upon the eſteem of theſe in general, ſo far as you and your characters are known to them. All the truly virtuous and good, eſteem and honor perſons of the ſame character, as ſuch. And whenever it ſeems to be otherwiſe, it is becauſe they *do not know them* to be ſuch; but are under a miſtake as to their character, either becauſe of ſome particular opinions which they may hold, that are ſuppoſed to be inconſiſtent with piety, or on ſome other account. But theſe caſes being excepted, which are very rare amongſt the truly wiſe and ſober; all good men in general actually love and honor one another. If they ever diſlike each other, it is not, conſidered under their real characters as virtuous and pious, but their *miſtaken* characters as vicious or impious, that they do ſo.

3. THERE are many more people who honor virtue in others, than practiſe it themſelves. By what I have read and obſerved, there is a very general regard paid to religion and virtue, even by vicious men. There is a witneſs for God and religion in the breaſts of very wicked perſons; which cauſes them, in ſome meaſure, to eſteem and reverence that virtue in others, which they have not the reſolution and integrity to practiſe. Beſides: Their own intereſt, which, you may be-ſure they love and regard, naturally leads them, ſome particular caſes being excepted, to form connexions, at leaſt in affairs of commerce and buſineſs, with the ſober, honeſt and virtuous, who, they know, will not wrong and deceive them; rather than with perſons of openly profligate, or ſuſpected morals. Even knaves cannot ordinarily truſt knaves with their intereſt; but they can and do, much oftener and more freely, truſt men of approved virtue and integrity with it. When good men are deſpiſed or diſliked by the bad, it is generally, if not always owing to one or other of the cauſes following. Some good men are, perhaps, of unpopular ſentiments in religion; and hypocritical zealots for the eſtabliſhed orthodoxy in any country, may diſlike them *merely* on that account. Other good men may have a tincture of ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm or ſourneſs; or they may have ſome perſonal oddities, ſingularities, or an uncouth behaviour; ſome diſagreeable appendages of their religion, or ſome natural imperfections attending them in a degree that is not common. Either of theſe

things may create a diſlike, and kind of averſion to them, even in the minds of thoſe, who at the ſame time cannot but eſteem them, conſidered as men of ſincere piety and virtue, or ſtripped of thoſe blemiſhes and imperfections. It muſt farther be allowed, that bad men, whether in *high* or *low* ſtations, may occaſionally have an averſion to the wiſe and honeſt, conſidered as ſtanding in oppoſition to their unrighteous, ambitious and avaritious deſigns. In which caſes, however, it is more properly ſaid, that they have an inordinate and criminal love to their intereſt, or to power and worldly honors, than that they have any real diſlike to thoſe good men, conſidered as ſuch: For they rather eſteem them in their hearts, even while they would be glad to have them out of their way. Thus alſo bad men, whether of *high* or *low* degree, may occaſionally have ſome *dirty jobs*, and *wicked work* to do, in which none will ſerve them, except *dirty*, *lying*, " leud fellows of the baſer ſort;" whom they careſs for that very end, while they frown upon, and keep at a diſtance from, honeſt men: Not becauſe they inwardly eſteem the former, or diſlike the latter, as ſuch. For thoſe they ſtill deſpiſe, while they employ them in *ſuch work,* and theſe they honor in their hearts, tho' they will not *do*, but rather *obſtruct it.* As profane and vicious as the world is, there are in fact but very few, if any perſons in it, ſo abandoned as to hate or deſpiſe a good and virtuous man, only for being ſo; nay, as not to have an inward eſteem for him, and a ſecret contempt for thoſe that are of profligate principles and morals. So that if you are truly pious and virtuous; eſpecially if your religion is open and manly, free from ſuperſtition, ſourneſs and enthuſiaſm, and from any great ſingularities and oddities, you may depend, not only upon the reſpect and eſteem of all the wiſe and virtuous in general, but alſo upon that of the fooliſh and vicious, with a very few exceptions, Whereas, on the other hand, if you are vicious and profligate, you may be aſſured that you will be ſecretly deſpiſed, not only by the good, but even by the generality of the wicked themſelves.

4. As to what was ſaid in the objection, about men of bad morals being countenanced in ſome countries, while the virtuous and good have been neglected, after public *edicts* or *proclamations* which gave reaſon to expect the contrary; this is eaſily to be accounted for upon the principles laid down above—Either the true characters of theſe perſons reſpectively, were not known; or elſe the promoters of the former, and neglecters of the latter, had ſome particular ſiniſter and diſhonourable *ends* to anſwer by ſuch a conduct; which has doubtleſs ſometimes been the caſe— But, by the way, there cannot be a clearer teſtimony given to the eſteem and honor that are actually due to religion, in the opinion of the world, or of that diſ-approbation and contempt which are due to vice, than ſuch public acts, edicts or proclamations for the encouragement of the former, and for diſcountenancing the latter; how often ſoever the world has been deceived in

paſt ages, by the honourable, excellent and royal AUTHORS of them—Tho' in all governments, other circumſtances being alike, thoſe perſons who were *ſuppoſed* to be the *wiſeſt* and *beſt*, have in general actually had the preference given them, in all ages.

5. ANOTHER undeniable proof of the general eſteem there is in the world for virtue and religion, is *hypocriſy*. How many perſons, tho' wholly deſtitute of the reality, " the power," yet put on the " form of godlineſs," merely for the ſake of their credit and reputation in the world? If an homely bird decks herſelf out in the rich plumage of the peacock, it is doubtleſs in order to make a better appearance in the eyes of ſpectators, than ſhe could in her own—Wicked men know, that if they appear in their own proper colours, they muſt be contemned, if not ſhunned and deteſted by moſt people; even by thoſe that are in the ſame " cage of unclean and hateful birds" † with them. They therefore diſſemble, turn impoſtors, and adorn themſelves, if I may ſo expreſs it, with the feathers, and more reſpectable plumage of religious, honeſt men; that they may enjoy at once the reputation of religion, and the imaginary gains and advantages of unrighteouſneſs. There would be no occaſion for hypocriſy, and therefore no hypocrites, if wicked and profligate men were generally as much eſteemed and honoured as the good; any more than there would be counterfeit coin, if there were none genuine, that was commonly valued, and that paſſed current in the world. So

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† Rev. XVIII. 2.

that hypocriſy itſelf, that odious ſin, is, in ſome ſort a ſtanding witneſs for God and religion, in all ages and countries; as well as a proof of the general eſteem there is for virtue, how little ſoever there may be of the practice. It is a tacit confeſſion of the ſuperior excellency and honor of true religion; and that vice cannot well keep itſelf in countenance, even in this wicked world, without putting on ſome appearance of virtue. And if vice avails herſelf thus of the credit of religion; yet ſhe does homage to her for it, tho' unwillingly. For hypocriſy is a kind of tribute which the former, with an awkward and ſhameful reluctance, pays to the latter, her acknowledged ſuperior, from one generation to another, in all ages and all nations.

6. WHY do you, my young brethren—?—No, I will not ſay, *You*—But, why do the vicious and profligate chuſe ſecreſy and darkneſs, as the fitteſt occaſions for perpetrating their crimes? Why are they that are drunken, uſually "drunken in the night," rather than in the day? Why does "the eye of the adulterer wait for the twilight?" Why does that of the thief and aſſaſſin commonly do the ſame? In a word, why do vicious men in general chuſe to ſin in ſecret, rather than openly; and, as far as may be, to conceal their vices from the world, unleſs it is, becauſe they know the world in general diſlikes vice, and eſteems virtue; if not practically, yet in opinion?

7. DID you ever know any perſon that was addicted to ſlander and defamation, pretend to

reproach another, by *accuſing* him of loving or fearing God;—of honouring Jeſus Chriſt, and keeping his commandments;—of obſerving his own promiſes, and ſpeaking nothing but truth;—of loving his neighbour as himſelf, and of being honeſt, ſober and virtuous in his whole converſation?——They that deal in defamation, underſtand their wicked art, and the ſentiments of the world, much better than to ſay theſe things of any One by way of reproach; which they know would be the higheſt praiſe and commendation.

8. To put this matter at once in the faireſt and ſtrongeſt light, let me aſk you the following queſtion—Suppoſe you had ſome mortal enemy, whom you would be glad to ruin; and particularly, whom you deſired to ſee deſpiſed and deteſted by mankind in general; which do you think would contribute the moſt effectually to this end,—to repreſent him as a wicked and impious, a vicious, faithleſs, debauched and profligate perſon;—One that neither feared God, nor regarded man: Or, as One that was truly pious and ſober, upright and virtuous;—in a word, a ſincere chriſtian both in principle and practice? If you were determined to hurt your enemy's reputation as much as you could; if you were under no checks or reſtraints of conſcience, and if you were ſure to be believed by the world, in whatever you ſaid of him, which of theſe two very oppoſite characters would you give the hated perſon?—You can be at no loſs for an anſwer to ſo plain a queſtion: And that very anſwer, which

you have *now* in your minds, ſhews that you are ſenſible, the world in general eſteems virtuous and religious men, and contemns and abhors thoſe that are profligately wicked. You know that even the bad in general, much prefer, in their judgment and eſteem, the former to the latter: Tho' even the good are often under a kind of neceſſity of *keeping in*, having cloſe *connexions* with, and *courting* the vicious;—ſometimes, perhaps, for valuable public ends; but probably oftener, for private advantage, or for fear of *miſchief* from ſuch perſons; as our American Indians are ſaid formerly to have worſhipped the *devil*. An unhappy ſituation! How are they to be pitied, who have ſome real love to virtue; and yet are obliged, as it were, to careſs the profligate, on account of their riches, power, and that influence which they often have in the affairs of this fooliſh, corrupt and wicked world?—

I CANNOT but make this one ſhort reflexion on the foregoing obſervations, *viz*. That from them it plainly appears, that vicious men, more eſpecially under the light of the goſpel, are all in general *ſelf-condemned*; inaſmuch as they cannot but acknowledge and approve the right, in their own judgment and conſciences, as honourable and praiſe-worthy; and yet habitually do the wrong, from an evil propenſity in their natures. To allude to the words of the apoſtle, they conſent to the law of God, that is holy, juſt, good and ſpiritual; but ſtill themſelves are "carnal, ſold under ſin," as bond-ſervants and *ſlaves* to it; whoſe tyrannical dictates they obey, contrary to the light and law of the mind. For that which they do, they allow not; neither do they do that good, to which they have ſome faint deſire; but what they do in a ſort hate, that they practiſe—O wretched, that they are! Who, or what ſhall deliver them from the body of this death, but "the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus?"

LET me exhort you, my young brethren, duly to conſider thoſe motives to true religion, which have been mentioned in this diſcourſe. Whatever your corrupt paſſions may have to object, I know that I have a powerful party on my ſide in your breaſts and boſoms; I mean your own conſcience, your own reaſon. To that, and to God, the ſource of all reaſon, light, truth and juſtice, I have ſurely a right to make an appeal from the partial, bribed, blind judgment of paſſion, and carnal affections. I accordingly lodge my appeal there, with them: And you muſt, whether you will or no, anſwer, and give an account of yourſelves, at both thoſe tribunals;—unleſs you ſhould give up the cauſe by conſenting, as you are exhorted, "to be ſober-minded."

LET me juſt add, with reference to the laſt-mentioned argument, as to your reputation in the world; that this will very much depend upon your behaviour in youth. The character is moſt commonly formed and eſtabliſhed in that ſeaſon of life, either as good or bad: And whichever of them it is, it will be of no ſmall conſequence to you in this world, while you are inhabitants of it. A bad name is often of fatal conſequence to a young man juſt ſetting out in the world, as to his intereſt therein. On the other hand, "a good name is rather to be choſen "than great riches, and loving-favor, than ſilver "and gold." A good character preſerves old, and creates new friends; it is at once agreeable and advantageous in many reſpects. Allow me then, as One ſincerely concerned for your temporal, as well as eternal good, to exhort you ſeaſonably to take care of your reputation and honor, by a diſcrete, ſober and virtuous behaviour. And if any of you have unhappily, by former miſcarriages, brought diſgrace upon yourſelves; loſe no time, but immediately endeavour to retrieve your characters, by making it manifeſt that you have ſeen your errors, and are reformed.

THE world is candid enough to make ſome conſiderable allowances for the errors of young men, if they are not obſtinate in, but ſpeedily reform them. In this caſe, their unexperienced, tender age is a powerful advocate for them: It pleads ſo eloquently in their behalf, that it never fails to excite compaſſion, and to obtain a pardon for them from the world. And, what is of infinitely more importance to you, if you ſincerely repent of, and forſake your evil ways, God will not remember them againſt you: He will not be always wroth, neither will he keep his anger forever. "If the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed—and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live; he ſhall not die. All his tranſgreſſions that he hath committd, they "*ſhall not be mentioned unto him*"—With God you have a far more powerful advocate than your youth;—One whom the Father heareth always, even "Jeſus Chriſt the righteous." But ſtill you ought to plead, ſtill to implore mercy for yourſelves. And I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with reminding you of part of a prayer of the royal pſalmiſt, which you might do well to conſider and imitate—"Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, "and thy loving-kindneſs; for they have been "ever of old. Remember not the *ſins of my "youth*, nor my tranſgreſſions: According to "thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodneſs ſake, O Lord.—For thy name ſake, O "Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great!"†

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† Pſalm XXV.

SERMON VII.

SERMON VII.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety, from other Conſiderations, *viz.* (8.) Of their temporal Advantage. (9.) Of their Uſefulneſs in the World. (10.) Of thoſe Perſons whom they will pleaſe hereby. (11.) Of thoſe whom they will gratify by the contrary. (12.) Of one End of Chriſt's coming into the World, *namely,* to "purify unto himſelf a peculiar people," &c.

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TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

MY young brethren, in the preceeding diſcourſe you were exhorted to be ſober-minded, by divers conſiderations and motives, which need not now be mentioned. I ſhall therefore, without any repetition, proceed in this exhortation, by laying before you ſome other arguments; all, of real, tho' not of equal weight;

weight: Hoping that, for your own ſakes, you will give ſuch an attention to them, as they may reaſonably demand. Wherefore,

VIII. To be ſober-minded will be moſt for your *advantage* in *this world*; moſt for the health of your bodies, and for your outward proſperity in all other reſpects. How this tends to the peace and comfort of your minds, and alſo to your reputation in the world, was ſhewn in the foregoing diſcourſe. And it may anſwer a valuable end, if I can now make it appear to you, that your temporal felicity in other reſpects, very much depends upon your being truly religious. Tho' this is not an argument of the greateſt weight; yet it is of conſiderable importance, as it may remove ſome prejudices againſt religion, ariſing from a falſe ſuppoſition, that it is prejudicial to your worldly felicity. And I ſhall inſiſt the longer upon this argument, becauſe, as I apprehend, it is not ſo frequently and particularly diſcuſſed in the pulpit, as might be for the credit, and thereby for the intereſt of religion.

BUT you will obſerve, that when I ſpeak of it as being for your intereſt to be ſober-minded, in conformity to the principles and precepts of chriſtianity, I ſpeak with particular reference to the age and country in which you live; wherein this religion is publicly countenanced, and generally profeſſed. For, no regard being had to theſe circumſtances, it is ſuppoſeable that the belief, profeſſion and practice of the chriſtian religion, might be very detrimental to a perſon's credit and worldly intereſt, in that ſenſe of them which is here intended. If you lived in an age and country, wherein the name of Chriſt was generally odious, his religion not publicly tolerated, and his diſciples, as ſuch, reproached, perſecuted, ſubjected to the confiſcation of goods, to bonds and impriſonment; or even, wherein they were not allowed the privileges and liberties common to other ſubjects; upon this ſuppoſition, I ſay, your godly and chriſtian ſobriety would manifeſtly tend to hurt your reputation and intereſt, inſtead of promoting them. This was the condition, this the ſituation, theſe the circumſtances of chriſtians, for about three hundred years after Chriſt; till the days of the Emperor Conſtantine the Great. The public voice condemned them as an odious, impious ſect; the laws were againſt them; their enemies were inveterate, and had all the power in their hands. The conſequence was, that they were denied the common privileges of men; and " whoſoever would live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſuffered perſecution " in one or other, and ſometimes many of its hateful forms. Chriſtians, in thoſe ſad times, beſides being reproached for the name of Chriſt, were often called to ſuffer the loſs of all things; they were haled before kings, governors and other magiſtrates; they were impriſoned, thrown into dungeons, ſtoned, impaled, crucified, ſlain with the ſword, ſawn in ſunder; and forced to ſuffer unnumber'd indignities and tortures, merely as chriſtians; not accepting deliverance, on the condition of renouncing the faith, and blaſpheming the name of Chriſt "that they might obtain a better reſurrection." And though the perſecution did not rage againſt them in the ſame degree of fury, during the long period before-mentioned; yet in any part thereof, it was apparently contrary to a man's worldly reputation and intereſt, to be a chriſtian: As it may be even at this day, in countries where the laws and people in general, are againſt the religion and diſciples of Chriſt; and as it may be for proteſtants in roman-catholic countries, or any others called chriſtian, where there is not a general toleration.

But with reſpect to ourſelves, and to this happy country of liberty, the caſe is quite otherwiſe. Chriſtianity is commonly profeſſed; the laws countenance and ſupport it; the government is in the hands of chriſtians, and chriſtians enjoy ſome privileges which others do not. There is here a general liberty and toleration for all to worſhip God according to their conſciences (not a little grievous to ſome particular perſons of dark, contracted and groveling minds.) And it is in general a very reputable thing amongſt us, to be a pious, virtuous and good man. Now, under theſe circumſtances, I ſay, and you may eaſily perceive, it is moſt for your worldly intereſt to be ſober-minded; far more ſo, in all reſpects, than it would be to be profligate and impious. Let me more particularly obſerve a few things here, in order to ſet the preſent argument in a proper light. And,

1. As, in theſe circumſtances, virtue and religion will be a recommendation of you to the eſteem of people, it manifeſtly tends to your intereſt in this reſpect; I mean, to what is commonly called worldly gain or profit. For people in general, good and bad, ſome few caſes being excepted, would much rather truſt, and have connexions in buſineſs with a ſober, honeſt man, of an eſtabliſhed good character, than with a vicious and profligate one, of a contrary character. And this evidently tends to a perſon's intereſt, whatever be his ſtation or calling in life; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that the wiſer and better part, and thoſe who ordinarily have it moſt in their power to ſerve and befriend you, will be more particularly diſpoſed to do ſo, from real regard; while others, for their own intereſt, will rather employ, or have concerns with an honeſt man, *cæteris paribus*, than with one of no religion, or of bad morals.

2. As to public poſts of honor or emolument, for which ſome of you, perhaps, either do, or may in time ſtand as candidates; it is to be hoped that, all other circumſtances being alike, your known integrity, and good behaviour in life, would be ſome recommen-

dation of you, and procure a preference. Certainly it would, under any tolerably wiſe and good adminiſtration of government; eſpecially in thoſe governments which have a great mixture of the popular form, and in countries where there are no iniquitous *teſts*; as in our own. Let me add, that if we have formerly, in certain inſtances, known perſons of infamous characters preferred to magiſtracies, or to other honourable and lucrative offices, to the neglect of virtue and merit; yet I ſhould be extremely loth to ſuppoſe that this is either now a *common* thing amongſt us, or will be ſo hereafter.

3. If we ſuppoſe the providence of God governs the world, in the manner declared in the holy ſcriptures; thoſe who love and ſerve him in ſincerity, have much more reaſon to expect his bleſſing upon their honeſt deſigns and undertakings, in order to obtain a competency of the good things of this life, than impious and profligate men have, to hope for his bleſſing upon their's; eſpecially upon ſuch deſigns as are in their nature diſhoneſt and criminal. This is the leaſt that can be ſaid with reference to what may be expected from divine providence, in the ordinary courſe of it, according to very numerous repreſentations in ſcripture; which are rather confirmed than contradicted by experience. Tho', as we do not certainly know the hearts of men, and may be deceived as to their characters; we muſt needs be very in-

adequate judges, when the conduct of providence is, or is not, ſtrictly agreeable to theſe repreſentations. And tho' there may be ſome exceptions here, as under other general rules; yet it is not improbable, that theſe may be much fewer in the preſent caſe, than is commonly ſuppoſed. The examples of wicked men proſpered in this world, are indeed very numerous, and indiſputable: For God is good to the unthankful and to the evil. But it is not, neither can it be, ſo certain to us on the other hand, that the good are often forſaken, or left deſtitute by him. And it is not unworthy of remark, that in that pſalm wherein the proſperity of ſome wicked men, is ſet forth more amply than in any other part of ſcripture, the inſpired pſalmiſt makes the following declaration, ſo much to the honor of divine providence: "The ſteps of a good "man are ordered by the Lord; and he de-"lighteth in his way. Tho' he fall, he ſhall "not be utterly caſt down: For the Lord "upholdeth him with his hand. I have been "young, and now am old; yet have I "not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his "ſeed begging bread." †

4. It ſhould be obſerved, that many of thoſe virtues which belong to the head of chriſtian ſobriety, have, in their very nature, a direct tendency to promote your temporal intereſt and happineſs. For example; diligence in your worldly callings, temperance

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† Pſalm XXXVII. 23, 24, 25.

in meat and drink, and a virtuous moderation in other reſpects, have a plain, direct tendency to ſecure and advance your wealth, your health and eaſe; and to prolong your lives. In comformity whereto, Solomon ſays of wiſdom, that "length of days is in her right hand, and in her left, riches and honor."

On the other hand,

5. Most of thoſe vices and exceſſes, which are repugnant to ſobriety, have as direct and apparent a tendency to prejudice your worldly intereſt and happineſs. For is not this evidently true of idleneſs, intemperance, pride and luxury — of waſting your time, and ſquandering away your money in riotous living, in leudneſs and debauchery, in the fopperies of dreſs, in frequent and expenſive diverſions, and the like? Theſe are all coſtly and impoveriſhing vices: And ſome of them are as prejudicial to the health of your bodies, as they are to your purſes and your ſouls. How many ſad examples have there been of people, particularly of young men, that have, by theſe and ſuch-like follies and exceſſes, abſolutely deſtroyed themſelves as to this world?—their reputation, their eſtates, their health, their lives! — "Be not over much wicked," ſays the wiſe man; "neither be thou fooliſh: Why ſhouldeſt thou die before thy time?" But when or where did you ever know a young man ruin and deſtroy himſelf by his wiſdom or ſobriety, his virtue and religion!

6. If it ſhould be ſaid, that a man has ſometimes an opportunity to increaſe his riches by diſhoneſt means ;—for example, by lying, perjury, extortion, taking bribes, theft, fraud, or lawleſs violence and robbery : And that, if he foregoes theſe tempting and *precious opportunities* for the ſake of religion and a good conſcience, his virtue is then prejudicial to his intereſt : I will not " ſpeak wickedly for God, " by abſolutely denying that any man ever did, or can, increaſe his wealth by ſuch unjuſt means : Even our own age and country might furniſh ſome examples of this kind. But let me make a few queries here. Do you not think, there are many *more* people, who hurt their worldly intereſt in the end by diſhoneſty ; by loſing their credit, character and buſineſs, than there are who prejudice it by a ſtrict adherence to truth and juſtice, and a ſteady perſeverance in honeſt courſes ? I think this will admit of no doubt : So that the advantage, upon the whole, is ſtill on the ſide of virtue and ſobriety. But, admitting that you were abſolutely ſure, as you cannot be, of bettering your worldly circumſtances in the end, by any iniquitous means ; let me next aſk, *How much* you think it is *honeſtly* worth to be a knave ; a liar, cheat, or perjured villain ? I conclude, you would not forfeit your honor and conſcience for a very trifling ſum, as many have done. For *how much* then, do you think it would really be worth while to do it ? Even Balaam, who ſecretly

loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs, could not but ſay in his calm reflexions, when Balak the King of Moab offered him a large ſum to do a wicked thing—"If Balak would give "me his houſe-full of ſilver and gold, I can-"not go beyond the commandment of the "Lord, to do good or bad."* — Now, was this a reaſonable reflexion, or was it not? You cannot deny it to be ſo. And can you hope, by any unrighteous means, to get more than a royal palace-full of ſilver and gold? And if you could, yet would not theſe ungodly gains be over-ballanced by the uneaſy reflexions in your own minds? Would not your real happineſs in this world be rather obſtructed than promoted, by theſe unrighteous, tho' gainful practices? But ſuch great gains of iniquity and fraud, as theſe, are wholly imaginary, unleſs perhaps, you were kings or princes, or their chief *miniſters* and *favourites.* — If you are diſhoneſt, or ever ſo wicked and avaritious; yet you muſt play at far *ſmaller games* than theſe. Nay, according to the ordinary, eſtabliſhed courſe of things, intereſt is actually on the ſide of virtue and honeſty. Tho' religion, honor and conſcience were wholly out of the queſtion; yet any *common man* would run a moſt imprudent riſque in becoming a knave and villain, with a view to worldly gain. Almoſt all perſons, except a *few great men* and their *tools*, hurt their intereſt at laſt, inſtead of ſerving it, by injuſtice and oppreſſion, fraud and violence. How often do men utterly ruin their credit, and with it, their temporal intereſt, by being greedy of gain, and uſing lawleſs means to obtain it? Yea, how often do they hereby procure infamous puniſhment, with the loſs of all, from the hands of civil juſtice? and even capital puniſhment? It is therefore evident, upon the whole, according to the good old proverb, that *honeſty is the beſt policy;* tho' we confine our views intirely to worldly gain and profit. "An inheritance may be gotten "haſtily at the beginning", ſays the wiſe man, "but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſſed."— And again: "Envy not the oppreſſor, and "and chuſe none of his ways—The curſe of "the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked: "but he bleſſeth the habitation of the juſt." And God declareth by the prophet Jeremiah, That "as the partridge ſitteth on eggs, and "hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth "riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in "the midſt of his days; and at his end ſhall "be a fool."

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* Num. XXIV. 13.

7. But you will ſay, perhaps, that giving alms to the poor is one of the duties of religion; and that this is directly contrary to a perſon's worldly intereſt, and tends to poverty. Let me briefly hint a few things, relative to this objection. And, firſt; in giving alms every man is bound in reaſon to have ſome conſideration of his own ability, circumſtances, real occaſions, and the obligations of

juſtice to his family, and to others. No perſon, except in ſome very uncommon caſes, is obliged to give more than he can afford without much difficulty, or ſtreightning himſelf; never, more than is conſiſtent with the obligations which he is under to others in point of juſtice. In the next place, if you are induſtrious, and avoid all fooliſh, extravagant and ſinful expences, as religion obliges you to be and do, you may the better afford to give ſomething to the neceſſitous ſick and poor. A quarter part of what many conſume in their expenſive follies and vices, both to the hurt of themſelves and others, might make them tolerable good chriſtians in point of alms-giving, if employed in that way, from a good principle. Tho' you ſhould diſcharge this chriſtian duty, as far as could in reaſon be expected of you, yet it would probably be much leſs expenſive to you than thoſe vices, follies and exceſſes, which are common amongſt young men: And you would, at the ſame time, have a rational and ſolid ſatisfaction therein; whereas ſhame and remorſe are the natural fruits of intemperance and luxury, riot and debauchery. Again: Though you were wholly deſtitute of chriſtian ſobriety; yet if you had but common humanity, you would not refuſe an alms, once in a while, to a miſerable fellow-creature ready to periſh with cold or hunger, when it was in your power to relieve him. So that your being truly religious, and giving alms from a chriſtian principle, might not, perhaps, be the occaſion of any great addition to your expences of this ſort: I mean, unleſs you were otherwiſe to be hardened to a great degree indeed; ſo as to be deſtitute of the common feelings of pity and compaſſion, as well as of the love of God. You muſt get rid of all ſympathy and humanity, and be worſe than barbarians; I mean, become *miſers,* if you would ſave all expences of this kind; for, merely being deſtitute of chriſtianity, will not anſwer the end. Moreover; you may reaſonably expect the bleſſing of God abundantly to make up to you whatever you beſtow in diſcrete and well-timed charity to the poor, according to his commandments. There are many paſſages of ſcripture, directly to this purpoſe. I have time to remind you of two or three only, from the writings of Solomon —Honor the Lord with thy ſubſtance;—ſo "ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty"—"He "that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; "and that which he giveth, he will ſurely "repay him." And very obſervable is the following paſſage: "There is that ſcattereth, "and yet increaſeth: And there is that with-"holdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth "to poverty. The liberal ſoul ſhall be made "fat; and he that watereth, ſhall alſo be "watered himſelf."* You can then have no reaſonable objection againſt religion, on account of its tendency to impoveriſh you in the way of alms-giving: But this objection ſtands in great force againſt irreligion, oppreſſion, uncharitableneſs, ſloth, luxury, riot, and every kind of vicious exceſs.

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* Prov. XI. 24, 25.

UPON laying together what has been ſaid under this, and ſome preceding heads of argument, there is one general, and very important reflection in favour of religion, which naturally ariſes. It is this, that as a ſober, religious life is the only reaſonable one; ſo it is by far the happieſt, and, in all reſpects, the moſt for your advantage in this world. If you place happineſs in having peace of mind; that has been ſhewn to be the genuine fruit of religion; as diſquietude within, is the invariable conſequence of irreligion, vice and folly. If you place it in reputation, or the good opinion of others; that is the natural attendant of virtue and ſobriety; as contempt and diſgrace are of the contrary. If you place it in bodily health and long life; theſe are moſt effectually promoted by ſobriety; as ſickneſs, pains and a premature death, are the frequent effects of intemperance, and profligate morals. If you place it in worldly riches; religion and virtue are very friendly to it in this view: Whereas there are many vices which tend directly to poverty; much more ſo, than any one virtue that can be named. Theſe things are not only certain, but obvious; they lie level to all capacites. And is it not a great recommendation of religion to your judgment, your reaſon, that it is the moſt ſure and effectual means imaginable, ſame extraordinary caſes being excepted, to promote your temporal felicity in all theſe reſpects?—your peace of mind, your reputation and honor, your health with length of days, and your intereſt, in the moſt uſual ſenſe of this word? This is ſtrict truth, according to the eſtabliſhed courſe of things, at leaſt in all countries where the true religion is publickly countenanced, and generally profeſſed. So that tho' "gain is not godlineſs," as ſome may imagine; yet we have the beſt authority to ſay, that "godlineſs is profitable "unto ALL things; having promiſe of the "*life that now is*, and of that which is to "come. This is a faithful ſaying.‡"

WHAT then are all thoſe imaginations which young people commonly entertain about religion, as if it were unfriendly to their temporal intereſt and felicity? What are all ſuch imaginations, I ſay, but idle fancies, chimeras and hobgoblins, which mere fiction, or the father of lies has invented, to impoſe upon your credulity, and deceive you to your deſtruction? As if the ways of wiſdom, of virtue and of God, were gloomy, joyleſs, hard and diſagreeable; and thoſe of folly, vice and ſatan, eaſy, profitable, delightful, and truly happy! What a reproach is it to human nature, that ſuch bugbears as theſe; —conceits, ſo contrary to all probability and ſenſe, to the word of God, and to the experience of all wiſe and good men, ſhould ever gain the leaſt credit, ſo as to frighten either the old or young from being ſober-minded; and to make them believe that true happineſs is the fruit of error, folly and vice!

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‡ Tim. IV. 8, 9.

It is probable that ſome well-meaning men have contributed largely to the carrying on ſo ſtrange and pernicious a deluſion, not only by their own gloomy, and over-auſtere behaviour; but by abridging the innocent pleaſures and liberties of youth, in divers reſpects; particularly by repreſenting all recreations and paſtimes as inconſiſtent with pure and undefiled religion, inſtead of being content with guarding againſt the abuſes of them. There is ground to think that theſe irrational and unſcriptural ſeverities, have been a fatal ſtumbling-block to many young people; and made them dread the very thoughts of religion, as if it were an irreconcileable foe to all temporal happineſs. But as it is incumbent upon the teachers of religion, utterly to diſcountenance every thing that is unreaſonable, and contrary to the laws of God; they ought doubtleſs, on the other hand, to allow and permit to all, particularly to the young, all thoſe innocent liberties and amuſements, which the word of God allows or permits. He that adds to the commandments, by forbidding what God has not forbidden, is as preſumptuous and criminal as he that diminiſhes from them, by nullifying ſome of his precepts. In many caſes the former is of as bad conſequence as the latter, to the intereſt of virtue and religion in the world. It is ſo particularly in this caſe, when the young are deterred from being ſober-minded, by being unwarrantably abridged of thoſe recreations and amuſements, which God has not prohibited, and which human nature, in it's preſent ſtate, ſeems to require. Nor are the "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," and laying "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, on men's ſhoulders," the ſlighteſt accuſations which our Lord brought againſt thoſe *grave, auſtere, proud, ſolemn-fac'd* hypocrites, the ancient ſcribes and phariſees.* There is, in ſhort, no one pleaſure or ſatiſfaction in life, that is proper to the nature of man, but what may be enjoyed in far greater perfection, within the limits and laws of a truly chriſtian ſobriety, than it can poſſibly be enjoyed in the violation of them, or in the ways of folly, vice and criminal exceſs. The ways of wiſdom are, in the higheſt ſenſe, ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. This you will experimentally know, whenever you, in earneſt, make the experiment. To proceed,

IX. Your future *uſefulneſs*, as well as your own honor, intereſt and happineſs in the world, greatly depends upon your ſobriety and good conduct. He that lives ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in the world, cannot be a miſchievous member of ſociety: Nay, he cannot but be ſerviceable, and a real ornament to it in his ſtation, whether high or low; as every member of the natural body, in the regular diſcharge of its particular office, contributes to the good and perfection of the body. But can the ſame be ſaid with equal truth and propriety, of irreligious, wicked and profligate men? It cannot.

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* Of the lawfulneſs and the abuſes of Recreations, ſee Serm. IV. page 143 —— 150 incluſive.

It is indeed owned, that bad men ſometimes do much good in the world. But this is either, firſt, only accidentally; as we ſay good may be brought out of evil. Or, ſecondly, the good which they do, is by ſuch of their actions as are in their nature good, lawful and right, externally conſidered; not by their wicked and unrighteous deeds. Or, laſtly, they may do good to the world by ſerving as examples and warnings to it, of the ſhame and miſery which are the natural conſequence of vice and folly: So that, by their means, others are deterred from purſuing thoſe courſes which are ruinous and deſtructive. Thus, in the firſt caſe, the pride, luxury and debauchery of the rich, may be the occaſion of diſperſing their wealth, and feeding the poor. In the ſecond caſe, a vicious man who is diligent in his lawful worldly buſineſs, who fights bravely for his king and country, or who diſcharges any civil office tolerably well, may thereby do good. Any of theſe things may be done by a very wicked man; but yet he that thus ſerves his country, does it not by his wickedneſs; but by that part of his conduct which is lawful and right. And in the third caſe mentioned, the thief, robber, or other malefactor, benefits his country by being hang'd; and ſerving for a terror and warning to evil-doers. In theſe three ſenſes, very wicked men may be ſerviceable to the world. But how much miſchief is commonly done by them in other reſpects? What ſore ſcourges? what curſes, have many wicked men been to the world, eſpecially in high ſtations?—to whole provinces, countries and kingdoms?—yea, to ſeveral kingdoms at once? And other wicked men commonly do miſchief in the world, in ſome proportion to their ſtation, and the ſphere in which they act. Conſider, on the other hand, what great and extenſive bleſſings many good men have been to the world, eſpecially in high ſtations;—to their country, nation, and divers nations at once: And other good men in a lower degree, according to their ſituation, power and influence. Which good they do directly, with deſign; not accidentally, as the wicked may do it in ſome inſtances and degrees.

Now, my young brethren, if you have the leaſt ingenuity, or generoſity of mind, you would chuſe to be bleſſings, and not curſes to the world. You would chuſe to fill up your reſpective ſtations in life, at once with honor to yourſelves, and benefit to ſociety: Both which you will do the moſt effectually by being truly virtuous and ſober-minded. Can you, without pain or regret, think of living rather as common nuſances, than to the advantage of thoſe with whom you are connected?—or even, of living and dying uſeleſs?—Or, if not intirely uſeleſs; yet would you be willing that what good you do, ſhould be as it were by accident, as the indirect conſequence of your behaviour, inſtead of being done intentionally and uprightly; ſo that it may be ſaid to be the proper conſequence of a virtuous and laudable behaviour? Or would you be willing to benefit ſociety, only by being ſad examples and warnings to it, of the diſgrace and miſery in which vice naturally terminates; and ſo making other men wiſe and cautious, virtuous and happy at your expence?—eſpecially at ſo dear a rate, as your own infamy and deſtruction! If you well digeſt theſe thoughts in your minds, they will fill you with an ardent, a truly noble deſire to do good in your day; to be ſerviceable in your reſpective places, inſtead of hurtful; and therefore to be wiſe and virtuous: Eſpecially when you conſider, that this will be, beyond all compariſon, the moſt honourable, profitable and delightful to yourſelves.

X. It ſhould be an argument of no ſmall weight with you to be ſober-minded, that you will hereby *pleaſe your beſt friends*; whereas, by the contrary, you will diſpleaſe, grieve and offend them. Do you aſk, who theſe good, theſe beſt friends are? I anſwer, in the firſt place,

God, your Father in heaven. He, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, who is "good to all, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works;" He, I ſay, will unqueſtionably be pleaſed by your being truly pious and virtuous—"Ye have received of us," ſays the apoſtle, "how ye ought to walk, and to pleaſe

God." If God invites, if he encourages, if he requires you to believe in, to love him, to walk in his righteous ways, certainly he will be pleaſed with your doing ſo; and diſpleaſed if you do otherwiſe. Has he not ſaid, "I love them that love me, and they that ſeek me early, ſhall find me?" Is not his holy Spirit ſaid to "ſtrive with men," to this end? and to be "grieved" with thoſe that reſiſt and oppoſe him?—with them that abuſe his goodneſs and oppoſe his light and truth; chuſing to walk in the paths of darkneſs and error, vice and miſery? What compaſſion did God of old expreſs towards Ephraim? what pleaſure at his repentance, and return to him?—aſſuming, as it were, all the paſſion and tenderneſs of an earthly father.—"I have ſurely "heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus—I "ſmote upon my thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, "even confounded, becauſe I did bear the re- "proach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear "ſon? is he a pleaſant child? For ſince I ſpake "againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill: "therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I "will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the "Lord."† Conſider alſo the well known parable of the prodigal ſon, as it is commonly called; one principal deſign of which was, to repreſent the love and compaſſion of our heavenly Father; and his pleaſure in thoſe that return to him. It is ſaid, that when the fooliſh, unhappy youth was on his return home, but while he was "yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him.

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† Jer. Ch. XXXI.

And preſently after, the father is introduced, ſaying to the elder brother, "It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found." Thus compaſſionate is God, to thoſe who err from his truth and ways; and thus pleaſed when they repent and return. This is alſo the principal ſcope of two other parables in the ſame chapter: ‡ One of which our Lord himſelf explains and applies in theſe words:—"Likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth;"—and the other of them, in words to the ſame purpoſe. "Like as a father pitieth his children," ſays the pſalmiſt, "ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And, ſurely, you have no friend equally good and great as the God and Father of all; none whom you are under ſuch ſtrong obligations to pleaſe; none, whom you ought, from a principle of ingenuity and gratitude, to be ſo cautious of offending.

ANOTHER of thoſe good friends, whom you will pleaſe by your ſobriety, is the Son of God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who loved you ſo well as to come down from heaven, to live a miſerable life on earth, and to die an ignominious, accurſed death upon a croſs, for your redemption. This you may be poſitively aſſured of: For "he gave himſelf a ranſom for ALL;"—"taſted death for EVERY man," and is the "propitiation for the ſins of the WHOLE world." In the days of his fleſh, he ſhewed the tendereſt love and kindneſs, not only to young men, as is recorded upon ſeveral occaſions, but even to little children;

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‡ Luke Ch. XV.

children; taking them up in his arms, bleſſing them, and ſaying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven." Our compaſſionate Saviour is ſaid to have been grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, who refuſed to receive his heavenly inſtructions, counſels and warnings, deſigned for their good. And how tenderly did he lament the folly, the impenitence, and the approaching deſtruction of Jeruſalem, when he beheld the city, and "wept over "it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at "leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong "unto thy peace! but now they are hidden from "thine eyes." † And again: "O Jeruſalem, "Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and "ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how "often would I have gathered thy children "together, even as an hen gathereth her chickens "under her wings, and ye would not!" ‡ What a lively repreſentation is this, of his compaſſion even for obdurate ſinners? The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, tho' ſet down in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, has the like love, the like pity, the like tenderneſs for you all in general, now, that he had of old for Jeruſalem. His goodneſs is unchanged; he can ſtill have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; being a merciful, as well as faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining unto God. And will you diſpleaſe, will you grieve, will you offend ſuch a Friend, by perſevering in ſin and folly?—One, who has laid you under ſuch immenſe obligations!

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† Luke XIX. 42. ‡ Matt. XXIII. 37.

THE holy angels, tho' unſeen and unknown by you, are other, and truly excellent friends to you; whom you would highly pleaſe and delight, by obeying their Lord and our's; and whom you diſpleaſe by perſevering in your ſinful ways. They are all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation: And it is particularly declared by our Saviour, that "there is joy in the preſence of the angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth." Surely then, you will, on the other hand, give them trouble and ſorrow, if ſorrow can touch thoſe pure and bleſſed intelligencies, by reſiſting and diſobeying the truth. And does it become you to grieve theſe benevolent ſpirits, who are as it were your appointed guardians; who delight in doing good offices for you, in conformity to their charge; and who would be ſo rejoiced at your converſion to God?

OTHER of your friends, ſome of whom were probably once known to you, tho' now removed out of your ſight, and whom you would pleaſe by being ſober-minded, are "juſt men made perfect;" the noble army of martyrs, and the whole church of the firſt born, which are written in heaven. Amongſt theſe are all your pious anceſtors, who have died in the Lord; and who now live with him, beholding his face in righteouſneſs. Amongſt them are alſo, probably, ſome of your other near relations, and cotemporaries; thoſe whom you lately knew and converſed with. All, all theſe, as well as the "innumerable company of angels," wiſh to ſee you truly wiſe and virtuous; that ſo, in due time, they may hail you to thoſe bliſsful regions; and that you may be forever aſſociated with them in one glorious ſociety, "a kingdom that cannot be ſhaken." Yea, my young brethren, methinks, almoſt, I hear them now calling to you from the cœleſtial manſions, in the ſame words which the *two witneſſes* heard from heaven, when a great voice came to them, ſaying, "COME UP HITHER!"†—For the bride, the Lamb's wife, [the church triumphant] as well as the Spirit, ſaith, "COME. And let him that heareth ſay, COME. And let him that is athirſt, COME: And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely."‡

YOUR beſt friends on earth, as well as in heaven, will be rejoiced to ſee you wiſe and virtuous; and grieved to ſee you fooliſh and profligate. I may here particularly mention your pious and good parents, who have done ſo much for you, and whoſe love you cannot doubt. "A wiſe ſon," ſays Solomon, "maketh a glad father; but a fooliſh ſon is the heavineſs of his mother." Every virtuous and good parent, could ſincerely addreſs his child in the language of the ſame wiſe king—"My ſon, if "thine heart be wiſe, my heart ſhall rejoice, "even mine; yea, my reins ſhall rejoice.—"‖ All good men had far rather ſee their children ſober-minded, the friends and followers of Jeſus Chriſt, than beautiful, rich and proſperous in this world. And whom, upon earth, ſhould you be ſo deſirous to pleaſe and gratify, or ſo loth to grieve and diſquiet, as thoſe to whom, under God, you owe your very being?—thoſe who have brought you up with ſo much care and tenderneſs, taking unwearied pains for you; and whoſe chief worldly concern is probably, to ſee you well provided for, virtuous and happy?

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† Revel. XI. 12. ‡ Ch. XXII. 17. ‖ Prov. Ch. XXIII.

BUT you have many good friends beſides your parents, who would ſincerely rejoice to ſee you truly religious. All your acquaintance in general, that fear God, would be pleaſed to have proper evidence of your doing the ſame: And I know of One in particular, that would be ſo. He ſhall be nameleſs: Only I may tell you, he is One that, if his own mediocrity of years would allow him to uſe the paternal ſtile with reference to you, could, with great ſincerity, adopt thoſe words of the apoſtle John in his third epiſtle—"I have no greater joy, than to hear that my "children walk in the truth." Let me juſt add, that he is One who claims ſome ſort of intereſt in you; as hoping to have you for his joy, glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jeſus——

THESE then, my beloved young brethren, are the friends whom you will certainly pleaſe by being ſober-minded, and diſpleaſe by going on in the paths of folly and vanity, vice and miſery. Think, whether they are not ſuch as you ought to be ſtudious of gratifying in every reaſonable way; and very loth to diſoblige, offend or grieve, by any ungrateful and unreaſonable conduct.

XI. Consider, in the next place, who thoſe perſons are, whom you will pleaſe by a fooliſh, criminal and profligate behaviour; that ſo, upon a fair compariſon, you may judge whether you ought to gratify the latter, or the former: For you cannot pleaſe both; their views, diſpoſitions and intereſts being directly oppoſite to each other; juſt as oppoſite as light and darkneſs, Chriſt and belial, heaven and hell.

And here a certain ancient, famous Prince, who has far more ſubjects than the greateſt earthly Monarch, claims the inglorious precedence. I mean, "the Prince of the devils"—"the Prince of the power of the air," the wicked ſpirit that worketh in all the children of diſobedience. You will, without doubt, highly gratify him and his angels, by continuing in your ſins. He made himſelf famous of old, by ſtirring up rebellion in heaven; and afterwards on earth, by deluding and betraying our firſt parents; by uſurping a kind of dominion over mankind; by deceiving almoſt the whole world for many ages; by his enmity and oppoſition to the Son of God, when he came to reſcue mankind from his cruel tyranny, and to deſtroy the works of the devil. This wicked One has, ever ſince, excited the children of darkneſs and diſobedience to oppoſe the truth, and the kingdom of God on earth; endeavouring by all means to deceive, to hurt and to deſtroy mankind; in which he has ſucceeded to admiration. "Your adverſary the devil," ſays the apoſtle, "goeth about continually as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour."

Now you cannot in the leaſt doubt, but that you will highly gratify the devil and his angels, by rejecting the truth of God; by denying and blaſpheming Jeſus Chriſt; by neglecting the worſhip of God, deſpiſing the ordinances of the goſpel, and living wicked lives. Theſe are the very things which they aim at; which they have all along been, and are ſtill temping you to do, not in vain; the very things in which they place their joy, triumph and glory. Every time you ſet yourſelves to oppoſe the truth; every time you take God's name in vain; every time you turn your backs with contempt upon Chriſt's inſtitutions; every time you ſpeak falſely, or do any wicked thing, then it is that you pleaſe the devil; and the farther you are from all ſobriety of mind, the more dear will you be to him. You cannot more diſoblige theſe apoſtate ſpirits, than by a gracious reception of the goſpel, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. They have a fixed averſion to all ſobriety, all truth, all godlineſs, righteouſneſs, humility, charity and temperance. Beſides: Whenever any perſon, old or young, repents and returns to God, the devil is enraged at the thoughts of loſing a ſubject; he conſiders ſuch a One as a rebel and traitor to himſelf, and is ſorely vexed at having the prey which he was on the point of devouring, ſnatched as it were out of his jaws. Theſe envious and malicious ſpirits cannot endure that any of the earth-born ſons of Adam, ſhould be eternally happy in thoſe glorious manſions, from which themſelves were baniſhed for their pride, their ſedition, and rebellion againſt the King of heaven. So that there is not one of the angels of darkneſs, numerous as they are, but what you will gratify by continuing in ſin and folly, and highly diſpleaſe by being ſober-minded.

But what has ſatan ever done for you, that you ſhould be deſirous or willing to pleaſe him? Is he your maker? No. Does he preſerve and take care of you? No. Did he die for you? No; and is angry even to rage, that Another did. Has he laid you under any ſort of obligation to pleaſe him? No. Has he any encouragement to give you for pleaſing him? No. He will afterwards only upbraid and torment you for your folly therein. Did he ever intend you the leaſt good in any one reſpect? No; nothing but miſchief. Will you then gratify your inveterate adverſary, "that old ſerpent called the devil, and ſatan," or his angels?—eſpecially when you conſider that, by doing ſo, you will diſpleaſe the God that made and loves you; Jeſus Chriſt who died for you; and grieve the good Spirit of God, as well as all thoſe holy angels that "kept their firſt eſtate," and are daily employed in offices of kindneſs for you!

But beſides the devil and his angels, you may perhaps, by your ſin and folly, pleaſe great multitudes of the human race, both old and young, that have lived and died in their ſins, and are now in the place of torment. It ſeems not improbable, that theſe miſerable ſouls might chuſe to have other perſons tread in their ſteps, and ſhare their fate, inſtead of being ſober, wiſe and happy. This is the way in which envy and wickedneſs, diſappointment and deſpair, commonly work; I mean in this world. Tho' it ſeems in ſome meaſure doubtful, whether you would pleaſe even thoſe ſelf-deſtroying perſons, when we conſider our Saviour's parable, commonly called the parable of Dives and Lazarus. According to which, when the rich fool died, and lift up his eyes in hell, he requeſted that warning might be ſent from the inviſible world to his brethren on earth, leſt they alſo ſhould come into that place of torment. When I conſider this part of the parable, I cannot be confident that you would pleaſe thoſe wretched ſouls in darkneſs and deſpair, by following their example, and having your portion with them; tho' there are ſome other paſſages of ſcripture, which ſeem to favor this ſuppoſition; particularly the following— "Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet "thee at thy coming: It ſtirreth up the dead for "thee, even all the chief ones of the earth"†— But ſuppoſing it were certain, that you would gratify all the wicked that are already in the regions of woe, by being vicious and impious; yet there can be no reaſon why you ſhould be deſirous to pleaſe them at all; eſpecially at ſo dear a rate; and when you conſider, that you cannot do this without diſpleaſing the "ſpirits of juſt men made perfect," who wiſh well to you, and long for an opportunity to welcome and congratulate your ſafe arrival at the manſions of joy and glory. But,

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† Iſai. XIV. 9.

LASTLY here, By continuing in your ſins, you will probably pleaſe ſome of the moſt fooliſh and abandoned of mankind, both male and female. Such perſons as theſe, may be in ſome meaſure kept in countenance, and perhaps otherwiſe gratified, by having you for their companions in folly and wickedneſs. And, on the other hand, ſhould you become virtuous and ſober, they might be diſguſted thereat; looking upon your reformation and good conduct as a tacit reproach to themſelves for their continued profligacy, and depraved manners. But would it be any ways proper for you to pleaſe ſuch fooliſh and wicked perſons as theſe, who do not ſincerely wiſh well to you, whatever they may pretend? Eſpecially, when by that means you will certainly diſpleaſe and trouble many wiſe and virtuous people; your parents and others, who are unqueſtionably your friends. Let me here remind you of a paſſage in the Proverbs of Solomon, relating to the enticements of evil companions; not merely becauſe it is directly to the point in hand, but becauſe I have not any where elſe, perhaps, ſo particularly warned you as to this matter, as would have been proper. "My ſon," ſays the wiſe man, "if ſinners entice "thee, conſent thou not. If they ſay, Come "with us—Caſt in thy lot among us—my ſon, "walk not in the way with them; refrain thy "foot from their path: For their feet run "to evil—and they lay wait for their own "blood."†

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† Prov. Ch. I.

THUS you have ſeen on one hand, whom you will certainly pleaſe by being ſober-minded; and on the other hand, whom you will, or may poſſibly gratify by the contrary. By it you will pleaſe God, your Maker and compaſſionate Father; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who laid down his life for you; the good ſpirit of God, which is ſtriving with you; the holy angels, who are daily miniſtring unto you; the noble army of martyrs, and all the ſaints in heaven, who long to hail your arrival there; your parents, and many other wiſe and good men on earth, who ſincerely wiſh well to you. But then, on the other hand, you will not hereby gratify, but diſpleaſe the god of this world, the devil and his angels, who ſeek your deſtruction; and, perhaps, the wicked already in a ſtate of torment; as well as a few profligate, abandon'd rakes of *both ſexes*, on earth;—ſome of the moſt fooliſh, wicked and infamous of the human race, who may either deſire you as their aſſociates in vice and folly, or might conſider your repentance and reformation as a tacit reproof of their impiety, impudence, and profligate lives. This, I think, is ſumming up the preſent argument fairly and impartially: Nor will I call in queſtion the goodneſs of your underſtandings ſo much, my young brethren, as to ſuppoſe it poſſible for you to doubt in any degree, whether it becomes you to gratify the former or the latter. One of them you muſt needs pleaſe, and diſpleaſe the other: You cannot gratify both. It therefore only remains for you to make your choice!

XII. If you ſhould continue in the practice of vice, folly and wickedneſs, one *principal end* of Chriſt's coming into the world;—of his teaching, life and death, will, as to you, be *intirely fruſtrated.* The important end which I have here in view, is your recovery to a ſound mind; your deliverance from your natural darkneſs and depravity, your luſts, and ſinful practices; by being brought to the knowledge, love and practice of true virtue, godlineſs, and all good works. That this was a principal end of Chriſt's mediation, is very clearly and forcibly declared in the ſame chapter with my text, as an argument for ſobriety and good works. "For the "grace of God that bringeth ſalvation to all "men, [ſo it might be rendered] hath appeared; "teaching us that, denying ungodlineſs, and "worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righ-"teouſly and godly in this preſent world." And again afterwards; "Who gave himſelf for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, "and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, "zealous of good works." Now what do theſe expreſſions imply, either more or leſs than this, That one great deſign of Chriſt's mediation, and of the grace of God appearing in the goſpel, was, that we might be ſober-minded in that comprehenſive ſenſe, in which theſe terms were explained in ſome preceeding diſcourſes? The whole evangelical hiſtory, wherein we have an account of our Lord's doctrine, example and precepts; and all the apoſtolical writings in general, are a clear, inconteſtible proof of the ſame thing. And does it not from hence as plainly appear, that if you continue to live unſoberly, unrighteouſly and ungodly in the world, you will thereby counteract and defeat one principal end of Chriſt's manifeſtation in the fleſh? Let me add, that if this deſign of his mediation is fruſtrated as to you, it will be in vain for you to expect, that the other important ends thereof will be anſwered; ſuch as, your being pardoned and juſtified, and being finally happy in the kingdom of heaven. For without that repentance and faith, which are the principle and beginning of a ſober, righteous and godly life, there is no forgiveneſs of ſins, no juſtification with God, no title to future glory, honor and immortality.

If you pay any regard at all to the chriſtian revelation, as I preſume you do, you cannot, ſurely, but be in ſome meaſure concerned, that the deſign of Chriſt's mediation in general, and particularly this eſſential and important part thereof, may be anſwered as to yourſelves. One would think, you muſt be greatly ſhocked at the thought of its being fruſtrated by your perſevering in the ways of vice and folly; as tho' the Son and grace of God had never appeared, bringing ſalvation to all that will thankfully accept of it. What! did the Son of God, the brightneſs of his glory, and "in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily;" did the Son of God, I ſay, give himſelf for you, that he might redeem you from all iniquity,—from the power, as well as the guilt of ſin; and will you, notwithſtanding this, live in the practice of ſin, of ungodlineſs and worldly luſts! Hath ſuch grace appeared, and has the Lord from heaven preached and died, that he might purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and will you ſtill do the works of darkneſs, the works of the devil, thoſe evil works which God abhorreth! I am aſtoniſhed, and even tremble, as you may well do, to think of your thus counteracting the deſign of the glorious goſpel. What the conſequence of this will be, may appear more particularly in my next diſcourſe. In the mean time, let me exhort you ſeriouſly to conſider of the matter; and to bear in mind thoſe words of the apoſtle, with which I conclude for the preſent — "Therefore we "ought to give the more earneſt heed to the "things which we have heard, leſt at any "time we ſhould let them ſlip. For if the "word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and "every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience re"ceived a juſt recompence of reward: How "ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſal"vation, which at the firſt began to be ſpo"ken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto "us by them that heard him; God alſo bear"ing them witneſs, both with ſigns and won"ders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of "the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

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‡ Heb. II 1, —— 4.

SERMON VIII.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety by ſome other Conſiderations, *viz.* (13.) Of an happy Death, and (14.) Of eternal Life, as the conſequence thereof. (15.) Of the miſerable Death of the wicked. And (16.) Of their Puniſhment in the World to come. The extreme Folly and Danger of delaying to be ſober-minded. Miſcellaneous Counſels and Warnings to young Men: And the whole concluded with a Prayer more particularly for them and the Author.

TITUS II. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.*

THE firſt diſcourſe upon this ſubject was taken up with ſome introductory obſervations. In the ſecond and third, the nature of chriſtian ſobriety was diſtinctly explained. In the fourth and fifth, divers ſins, follies and exceſſes, which are repugnant thereto, were particularly pointed out. In the ſixth and ſeventh, I exhorted you to be ſober-minded, by ſeveral conſiderations of great, tho' not all of equal weight. I ſhall now, by the will of God, proceed in this exhortation, my young brethren, by laying before you ſome other motives and arguments, if poſſible, more important in their nature than thoſe which have been mentioned already: For which reaſon they have been reſerved as the laſt. But they are very common arguments; ſuch as are at leaſt hinted at in almoſt every chapter of the new-teſtament, and touched upon in almoſt every ſermon you hear; as arguments of ſo intereſting a nature, and ſuch general uſe, ought doubtleſs to be. Their commonneſs, however, will at leaſt warrant my being ſhorter upon ſome of them, than would otherwiſe be convenient. To proceed then,

XIII. If you are ſober-minded in life, you will *die happily*, in a ſtate of *favor with God*. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and "let my laſt end be like his";—was the wiſh and prayer of that ſame wicked Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; but at a time when he was under the prophetic and divine afflatus, and thereby carried into futurity.* This is probably, in ſome ſort, the deſire of all wicked men in general; at leaſt, of all who live under the light of the goſpel, whenever they think of death. This they are often obliged to do; and are indeed, many of them, thro' fear of death, all their life-time ſubject to a miſerable bondage. How differently ſoever men chuſe to live; yet all in general would chuſe to die alike; 'to die the death of the righteous;—in peace and favor with the great God, and in hope of his glory.

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* Numb. XXIII. 10.

Now, to be truly wiſe and virtuous; to live the life of the righteous; or, in the good words of the ſame wicked Balaam, "to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God," ‡ is the ſure way to die the death of the righteous. But it is impoſſible in the nature of the thing, that a wicked, unrighteous man, continuing ſuch, ſhould die thus. Let me briefly guard againſt two miſconſtructions of my meaning here. Firſt, it is not hereby intended, that what is called, or truly is, a ſober, chriſtian and godly life, is a perfect righteouſneſs, in which to ſtand unſhaken at God's tribunal, or to meet death with compoſure, firmneſs and triumph, independently of the redemption wrought out by Chriſt, the gracious promiſes of the goſpel, or the "righteouſneſs of God by faith." That ſobriety of mind and manners, which is to give you peace and hope in death, is a chriſtian ſobriety: And this ſuppoſes repentance of ſin, chriſtian faith, an humble ſenſe

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‡ Micah VI. 8.

of you own unworthineſs, and a dependence upon the grace of God in Chriſt, for acceptance with him. Your hopes both in life and death, are to be grounded ultimately upon the free grace of God, as revealed in the goſpel; and upon your own ſobriety, in reflecting thereon, only indirectly or mediately, conſidered as an evidence of your being in a ſtate of favor with God, as the required condition of, and a meetneſs, preparation or qualification for, future happineſs: Or, in other words, as it is *characteriſtical* of thoſe perſons, who are entitled to the benefits of Chriſt's redemption. Secondly, it is not hereby intended, that none can be ſaved, according to the terms of the goſpel, beſides thoſe who have lived for a number of years, or ſome conſiderable time, in that ſober, righteous and godly manner, which the goſpel requires. Whenever a ſinner becomes a true penitent and believer, in the ſenſe of ſcripture, he is immediately pardoned, juſtified, and in a ſtate of ſalvation: Whether he lives afterwards to do works meet for repentance, affects not the ſafety of his ſtate, or the certainty of his ſalvation; tho' it may be of importance to him in other reſpects, particularly as to his peace, comfort and hope in death; or as an evidence of the genuineneſs of his repentance, faith, and converſion to God.

WITH theſe explanations, living a ſober and godly life, is on one hand neceſſary, and on the other hand, lays a ſolid foundation for peace and hope in death. The concioufneſs of having lived ſuch a life, will exclude a ſervile-fear of death, and brighten thoſe naturally-gloomy moments. Whoever has light in the Lord to ſay with the pſalmiſt—"The "Lord is my Shepherd—He reſtoreth my "ſoul; he leadeth me in the paths of righ-"teouſneſs;" will of courſe be enabled to join with him in the words following: "Yea, "tho' I walk through the valley of the ſha-"dow of death, I will fear no evil: For thou "art with me; thy rod and thy ſtaff they "comfort me."† Or if you can ſay with the holy apoſtle, when the time of his departure was at hand—"I have fought a good fight, I "have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the "faith;" you may alſo triumph with him in the words which immediately follow—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown "of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righ-"teous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and "not to me only, but unto all them that love "his appearing."* In a ſimilar manner the ſame apoſtle expreſſes his hope and joy, as reſulting from the witneſs of a good conſcience, in another of his epiſtles: "For our "rejoicing is this," ſays he, "the teſtimony "of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and "godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, "but by the grace of God, we have had our "converſation in the world—"‡ Agreeably

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† Pſal. XXIII. * 2 Tim. IV. 7, 8. ‡ 2 Cor. I. 12.

hereto, it is laid down as a ſtanding, general maxim in ſcripture, that "the righteous hath hope in his death:" A maxim which has been abundantly verified in all ages of the world, ever ſince death by ſin entered into it. And the faithful, in every period of the chriſtian church more eſpecially, have been able to triumph over death, ſaying, "O death, where "is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? "The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength "of ſin is the law. But thanks be to God, "which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt."‖

Now, my young brethren, ſince you muſt unqueſtionably die ſooner or later, would you not chuſe to die in ſuch a joyful, triumphant manner; meeting this laſt enemy, death, with "hopes full of immortality;" and, tho' naturally the "king of terrors," rather as your friendly deliverer from all pain and ſorrow, than with fear and trembling? I know you are deſirous of this; you cannot but wiſh for ſuch an happy and glorious exit, whenever your appointed time ſhall come. In one word then, be ſober-minded; for this will make both life and death happy to you.

XIV. It will not be unnatural to draw my next argument, from a conſideration of *that bleſſed, glorious* and *eternal life*," which God that cannot lie, hath promiſed to all them that believe in his Son, and keep his commandments. A principal deſign of the goſpel, is to proclaim and inſure to thoſe who practically believe it, a glorious reſurrection at our Lord's ſecond appearing, and eternal happineſs in the kingdom of God, as his free gift thro' Chriſt. This is the ſum of the goſpel, expreſſed in few words. It is unneceſſary to refer to particular paſſages of ſcripture, for theſe gracious promiſes; the new-teſtament is full of them. If you are perſwaded to be ſober-minded, this felicity, this unfading crown of glory and joy, will as ſurely be your portion, as God and his word are true. Your mortal bodies, which are quickly to be ſown in weakneſs, corruption and diſhonor, will in due time be raiſed in power, purity and glory, by the all-quickning voice of the Son of God. You ſhall ſtand at his right hand with great boldneſs, when he ſits upon the throne of his glory, while all the guilty nations are trembling at his left. Then ſhall your ears be raviſhed, your ſouls tranſported with thoſe gracious and moſt joyful words, from the mouth of him that died for you, and to whom all judgment and authority are committed — "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. †" In conſequence of which, you, with all the "righteous, ſhall go away into life eternal" ‡; and poſſeſs an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

‖ 1 Cor. XV. 55—

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† Mat. XXV. 24. ‡ ver. 46.

Can you think of theſe things, my young brethren, without being filled with an ardent deſire to be made partakers of ſuch an happineſs, ſuch glory, honor and immortality? I am ſure you cannot, if you really give credit to them. What is any earthly inheritance which you may have in view, in compariſon with that to which the "heirs of God, and "joint-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt," are entitled in the heavens! What are all worldly riches, but droſs and vanity, in compariſon with the treaſure there laid up for the righteous! How does all earthly glory ſink? how is it eclipſed? how does it vaniſh from the ſight, when you look forward to that, which the Lord of life and glory has promiſed to them that love him? Bleſſed indeed, thrice "bleſſed are they that do his commandments; that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in thro' the gates into the city."—And "the throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it; and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him. And they ſhall ſee his face; and his name ſhall be in their foreheads. And there ſhall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the ſun: For the Lord God giveth them light, and they ſhall reign for ever and ever." Is it not worth while to be ſober-minded, virtuous and obedient, for ſuch an happineſs, ſuch glory as this; even tho' you ſhould make yourſelves wretched thereby, during this tranſitory life, which is but as a vapor? Whereas the truth is, that you muſt needs be miſerable even now, unleſs you are truly religious; and that, by making ſure of eternal life, you will, beyond all compariſon, beſt provide for your temporal honor and felicity.

XV. CONSIDER, in the next place, that unleſs you are truly penitent and ſober-minded, the guilt of all your ſins will lie upon you, and you will be *wretched in death.* There is no forgiveneſs with God, even thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, but in the way of unfeigned repentance towards the former, and faith towards the latter. Which repentance and faith are implied in chriſtian ſobriety; and are the principle and ſubſtance of it, internally conſidered; as has been obſerved in the foregoing diſcourſes. It is therefore juſt as certain, that without ſobriety of mind, you will remain under guilt and condemnation, as it is, that repentance and faith are neceſſary to pardon, according to the tenor of the goſpel: Than which there is no one thing more clearly aſſerted in the holy ſcriptures; tho' ſome perſons, ſuppoſe pardon and juſtification to be prior to that repentance and faith, by or thro' which we are ſaid to be pardoned and juſtified. Abſurd and prepoſterous indeed!

BUT not to digreſs: If you ſhould continue in the practice of ſin and folly, and remain impenitent till death; how dreadful an hour will that be to you! I mean if you ſhould then have your thoughts and ſenſes about you; and not be ſnatched out of the world in a moment, without time for reflexion on what is paſt, or conſidering what is to come.— What horrors of conſcience? what diſtreſs and anguiſh of ſoul, will probably ſeize upon you, when you ſhall come to lie upon a ſick bed? When you ſhall find your fleſh and your heart at once failing you; and God, not the ſtrength of your heart, nor likely to be your portion, but your terror, forever! When all your ſins are brought to your remembrance; when you reflect how you have abuſed the goodneſs and patience of God; how you have deſpiſed his grace and mercy; how you have ſcorned his reproofs and threatnings! When it will no longer be in your power to forget God, nor to think of him, but with fear and amazement, as that almighty, moſt holy and righteous Being, whom you have offended! When the terrors of the laſt day, ſhall be preſent in imagination, and all the pains of hell that can be endured on earth, ſhall "get hold upon you!" This is the ſtate of wicked men under the goſpel, when they come to die; unleſs they are either ſelf-deluded hypocrites, or quite ſtupified, having their "conſciences ſeared as with an hot iron." Thus are they driven away in God's anger, while the righteous have hope and joy in their death. They are often ſo over-whelmed with a ſenſe of their guilt, and have ſuch a ſentence of eternal death in themſelves,—in their own prophetic conſciences, as not to have the leaſt heart or courage even to implore forgiveneſs; or to ſay, "God be merciful to me a ſinner"!—

Wretched ſtate indeed; to have ſuch a lively ſenſe of ſin, that the need of pardon is felt in the moſt excruciating manner; and yet to have all conceptions of God's mercy, as it were ſwallowed up and loſt in thoſe of his righteous vengeance! Tho' by the way, if ſinners ſhould implore mercy at ſuch a time, when they are under the actual arreſt of divine juſtice, it is by no means clear either from reaſon or ſcripture, that they ſhall obtain it. For they may do ſo, without that genuine repentance and faith, which the goſpel makes neceſſary in order to forgiveneſs. And there are many paſſages of ſcripture, which look quite the other way; I mean, which imply that the wicked may thus ſue for mercy, and yet be rejected; particularly a paſſage in the Proverbs of Solomon, with which I ſhall cloſe the preſent argument; and which I exhort you ſeriouſly to conſider, leſt yourſelves ſhould one day be ſad examples of the unutterable horrors of impenitent, dying ſinners— "Becauſe I called, and ye refuſed —ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you. Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me." *

THEIR

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* Prov. Ch. I.

THERE is nothing ſo near as the horror and deſpair of wicked men in the hour of death, to the actual torments of hell; whether in reſpect of time, or of pain and anguiſh: They are hell already begun in the ſoul. My laſt argument ſhall therefore be drawn

XVI. FROM a conſideration of the *future miſery* and *puniſhment of the wicked*, as foretold and repreſented in the ſacred oracles. You have already ſeen what the ſad conſequence of ſin and folly will be, both in life and in death. It now remains for you to look beyond life, death and the grave, into the eternal ſtate; and ſeriouſly to conſider what the conſequence thereof is to be in the other world; a ſtate, tho' inviſible, yet not imaginary, but as real as the preſent.

IF the only conſequence of dying in your ſins, were, to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven; to be baniſhed from the ſociety of juſt men made perfect, and of the innumerable company of holy angels; from the face of him that once died to ſave you, and from the favourable preſence of your Creator, your God, your Father, in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy: I ſay, if you were only to be thus excluded from the regions of the bleſſed, thus turned off and diſcarded, as unworthy of their fellowſhip; yet how can you endure the thoughts of this! When God pronounced only the following ſentence upon the wicked Cain, — "Now art thou curſed "from the earth — when thou tilleſt the

" ground, it ſhall not henceforth yield unto " thee her ſtrength: A *fugitive* and *vagabond* " ſhalt thou be in the earth"; the guilty wretch was ſo overwhelmed with the thoughts of his miſery and diſgrace, that he cried out, " My puniſhment is greater than I can bear. " Behold, thou haſt driven me out this day " from the face of the earth; and from thy " face ſhall I be hid; and I ſhall be a fugitive " and a vagabond in the earth."* This, ſurely, was but a light puniſhment, in compariſon of being exiled hereafter from the everlaſting kingdom of Chriſt. Can you then, (unleſs you are more ſtupified, more hardened and abandoned than that infamous murderer was) think, without the utmoſt grief and anguiſh of ſoul, of being excluded from heaven, and the bleſſed ſociety thereof? —Eſpecially, from the favour and enjoyment of Him, in whoſe favour is life, and whoſe loving-kindneſs is better than life; and to be fugitives and vagabonds in ſome unknown part of the world? Is this puniſhment no greater than you can bear? O diſmal exile indeed, tho' it were but for a few years or days! O inſupportable thought! unutterable woe! What! baniſhed from heaven, from the face of your God, your Father, your Saviour; as well as from the fellowſhip of good men, and holy angels! Think of it but a moment, and make it real to yourſelves; and you will find cauſe for a far more bitter lamentation than that of Cain!——

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* Gen. IV. 11——14.

BUT perhaps the place, the country, to which the wicked are to be thus baniſhed and confined, will be an agreeable one; a delightful region in ſome yet-undiſcovered part of the univerſe, where they may amuſe and enjoy themſelves in a conſiderable degree; and be conſoled, by the pleaſurable ſituation, in their abſence from God, and the company of the bleſſed in heaven. Far otherwiſe! Every place beſides heaven, will be an hell, a place of torment, to the wicked. And that, in which impenitent ſinners are to have their abode, is particularly repreſented in ſcripture, as a place of " outer darkneſs," and a " lake burning with fire and brimſtone," &c. Joyleſs region indeed!

AND who are to be the companions of your exile, if this ſhould be your own fate; as it moſt certainly will, if you ſhould live and die in your ſins? The felicity of creatures that are by nature formed for ſociety, depends very much upon the diſpoſitions and qualities of thoſe, with whom they converſe. But do you imagine that your companions in the realms of darkneſs, will be ſuch as you will be delighted with?—thoſe, whoſe ſociety will be a comfort and relief to you in your baniſhment from heaven, from ſaints and angels, from Chriſt and God? ſuch as will cauſe a degree of light and joy, in thoſe gloomy regions? Vain imagination! Your company will not alleviate, but increaſe your miſery. For what elſe can be expected from the ſociety of wicked perſons like yourſelves, in a ſtate of puniſhment; all, full of envy, rage, deſpair! Or what elſe can be expected from the ſociety of thoſe malicious ſpirits, the devil and his angels, who ſhall have deluded you to your deſtruction; and who are perhaps, at this very moment tempting you to infidelity; and pleaſing themſelves with the hopes, that they ſhall ſucceed in their deſigns againſt you! Can you expect to live in peace with, or to have any conſolation, any alleviation of your diſtreſs in the regions of woe, from ſuch company as this? If Job, in the day of his calamity, ſaid very juſtly even to his friends, "Miſerable comforters are ye all;" what will you ſay to ſuch comforters as theſe? —damned men and devils! Nor will you hereafter have any that are better, if you now reject that divine and bleſſed Comforter, the Spirit of truth and holineſs.

But perhaps you flatter yourſelves, that the time of this dreadful exile from God, in ſuch a diſmal region, and in company far worſe than the moſt lonely ſolitude, will be but ſhort: So that it may be borne by the wicked, at leaſt with ſome patience, from the proſpect of a ſpeedy releaſe, with liberty to enter into the manſions of reſt and joy. Far otherwiſe! In the language of ſcripture, "they ſhall be puniſhed with an everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And it is ſaid elſewhere, that "the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up forever and ever; and they have no reſt day nor night."—†

CONSIDER then the time, (for know that the time will come!) when the ſmall and great, being raiſed from the dead, ſhall ſtand before God—before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, appearing in the majeſty and glory of the FATHER, to receive the things done in the body. The time when all the wicked, and yourſelves amongſt them if you die impenitent, ſhall appear, tho' unwillingly, reluctant and trembling, before this dreadful tribunal; with a quick and perfect conſciouſneſs of all your ſins committed in this life; particularly of your having deſpiſed the riches of God's goodneſs, forbearance and long-ſuffering, and trodden under foot his Son, who once came into the world to ſave ſinners; and whom you ſhall then behold as your righteous Judge! The time when the "books ſhall be opened," thoſe faithful records of all your paſt tranſgreſſions in thought, word and deed; (mighty volumes!) to the truth of which in every tittle, your own conſciences ſhall teſtify as a thouſand witneſſes; declaring to you, with a deciſive voice not to be oppoſed, your juſt demerits! The time when, theſe diſmal pages being read before men and angels, and there being no need of witneſſes, that ſame Jeſus who was once crucified thro' weakneſs without the gates of Jeruſalem, and whoſe grace you ſcorned, ſhall ariſe to pronounce your doom with thunder in his hand, his eyes as a flame of fire, and a tempeſt in his face; thouſands ſtanding before him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels who excel in ſtrength, attending to execute his orders: When, having before paſſed ſentence on the bleſſed at his right-hand, he ſhall turn to thoſe on the left, ſaying with a voice like the ſound of many waters, " Depart from me"— ! — — O amazing, heart-diſſolving words! at once too important ever to be forgotten, and yet too dreadful, almoſt, to be remembered! — " Depart from me, ye " curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for " the devil and his angels." * — " The word of God, " ſaith the apoſtle, " is quick and powerful; and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. " You can hardly hear thoſe words of the Lord now uttered, tho' by a " man that is a worm " like yourſelves, without trembling as the guilty Fælix did,

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† The diſmal ſituation waſte and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all ſides round,
As one great furnace flam'd: yet from thoſe flames
No light; but rather darkneſs viſible,
Serv'd only to diſcover ſights of woe:
Regions of ſorrow! doleful ſhades! where peace
And reſt can never dwell! hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge——
Such place eternal juſtice had prepar'd——!

Parad. Loſt, L. I.

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* Mat. XXV. 41.

when the apoſtle reaſoned with him of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come; and tho' you probably conſider this ſcene as far remote in futurity. How then will your hearts endure, when you ſhall hear the ſame awful words in more than thunder, pronounced by Him, " from whoſe face the earth and the heavens ſhall flee away !" At his feet you will doubtleſs fall as dead ; as St. John once did, when, in the viſions of God, he ſaw him in his majeſty and glory; when " out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword, and his countenance was as the ſun ſhining in his ſtrength. " But alas ! he will not reanimate and comfort you, as he did the holy apoſtle on that occaſion—" I fell at his feet as " dead, " ſays the apoſtle ; " and he laid his " right-hand upon me, ſaying unto me, Fear " not ; I am the firſt and the laſt. I am he " that liveth and was dead ; and behold, I " am alive forevermore. " † No ! you will be raiſed up and revived, only as condemned malefactors, fainting under their pain or terrors, ſometimes are, to have the juſt ſentence, the *curſe of the law* punctually executed upon them. It is not cruelty to puniſh the wicked according to their demerits, when the ends of government require it ; as in the preſent caſe. Mercy having been before ſcorned, no weak pity or tenderneſs will have any place in this day of vengeance. For the Judge himſelf, who even now ſtandeth at the door, hath ſaid that the wicked thus condemned, "ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment."‡

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† Rev. I. 16, 17, 18.

It were moſt ingenuous in you, doubtleſs, to be led effectually to repentance, by the grace and goodneſs of God; as I would hope that ſome of you, at leaſt, will be. But if any of you are too far hardened for this, you perceive that motives of a very different kind are not wanting. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we exhort, we perſuade men." If the tender mercies of a Father will not, at leaſt let the righteous vengeance of a God, and the fear of wrath to come, ſerve to reclaim you from the error of your ways, that you may at laſt be found of him in peace! If you ſhould not be thus found of him, you will doubtleſs ſay, It had been "good for "you, that you had not been born." You have, ſurely, more ſenſe and ingenuity, than to ſuſpect I am become your enemy, becauſe I thus plainly tell you the truth. It is important, it is ſalutary truth; tho' perhaps irkſome to ſome of you in the hearing, and far from being the moſt agreeable to myſelf in the ſpeaking. If you duly receive and digeſt it, and are eventually made wiſe thereby; you will find it juſt the reverſe, in one reſpect, of the written roll or book given to the apoſtle to eat;---which was, in his mouth, at firſt, ſweet as honey, but in his belly, bitter as gall and wormwood. This, on the contrary, tho' bitter and unpalatable at firſt, like gall, will

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‡ Mat. XXV. 46.

in the end and digeſtion, be ſweet to you; yea, "ſweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Let me cloſe the preſent argument with the words of the wiſe man, addreſſed to the young; which words, while they ſeem to encourage young men to proceed in their fooliſh, criminal practices, are, in reality, the more ſolemn warning againſt it. "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth," ſays he; "and let thy heart chear thee in the days "of thy youth: and walk in the ways of "thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes. "But know thou, that for all theſe things "God will bring thee into judgment. There- "fore remove ſorrow from thine heart, and "put away evil from thy fleſh; for child- "hood and youth are vanity."†

THUS, my beloved young brethren, I have laid before you thoſe arguments and conſiderations of various kinds, by which I would, and now do, exhort you to be ſober-minded. It was far from being my intention to ſay all, or even an hundredth part, that might be ſaid with propriety upon this moſt intereſting ſubject. To allude to the words of the apoſtle John; if all the reaſons for, and motives to ſobriety, were to be written down, "I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written." For the arguments for ſobriety, or true religion, are in a ſort infinite, like God the object thereof: There is no end of them to be

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† Eccl. XI. 9, 10.

found; the ſubject is inexhauſtible, to any One that duly enters into the nature, ſpirit and importance of it. The natural dictates of your own conſciences, the holy ſcriptures, life and death, heaven, earth and hell, time and eternity; and even the commoneſt objects and occurrents, teem with arguments in an endleſs ſucceſſion, in behalf of true religion; clearly and loudly admoniſhing you to be wiſe and ſober, if you have but an ear to hear, and an heart to perceive. This, in general, is the ſentiment that Solomon expreſſes in the rhetorical, and nobly-ſublime manner following. "Wiſdom crieth *without*; ſhe uttereth
" her voice in the *ſtreets*: She crieth in the chief
" place of *concourſe*; in the opening of the
" *gates*, in the *city* ſhe uttereth her words,
" ſaying, How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye
" love ſimplicity? and the ſcorners delight
" in their ſcorning, and fools hate knowledge?
" Turn you at my reproof: Behold I will
" pour out my ſpirit unto you, I will make
" known my words unto you."

I CAN neither diſtruſt the validity of thoſe arguments which have been particularly propoſed to you, nor the goodneſs of your ununderſtandings, ſo much as to ſuppoſe it neceſſary to add any others to them, in order to the convincing your judgments what is the right, the wiſeſt, ſafeſt, happieſt courſe for you to purſue. No! I doubt not, but that this point, a very material one, is already gained. Would to God, that all your hearts

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and wills were as much in the right as to this matter, as I am perſwaded your heads are! And, methinks, you muſt have ſadly depraved and hardened hearts indeed, if even they are not in ſome meaſure touched by ſo many arguments, all drawn from the word of God; provided you have ſo far attended to, as to have a tolerable underſtanding of them. And having thus far diſcharged my own duty, by laying your's before you; the event muſt now be left with yourſelves, or rather with Him who hath the hearts of all men in his own hand. Without his bleſſing, even prophets and apoſtles may preach in vain; much more, ſo inconſiderable and unworthy a preacher of the everlaſting goſpel, as he that is now ſpeaking to you.

BUT you will ſay, perhaps, "We are young; and need not be in any haſte to be ſober-minded. It will anſwer the end as well a number of years hence, when we have in ſome meaſure ſated ourſelves with the pleaſures of ſin. How many are there about us, who, tho' much older, are not yet any wiſer or ſoberer than ourſelves? Let them ſet us an example; it will be ſufficient for us to follow our ſuperiors."

UNHAPPY young men! is the love of folly and vice then ſo deeply rooted in your hearts, that you cannot bear the thought of parting with them ſo ſoon? Do you think it hard and grievous to be put upon the remembrance of your Creator, your Father, even now in the days of your youth? If young men need not be ſober-minded, why did the inſpired apoſtle enjoin Titus to exhort them to be ſo? Young men, certainly, need not be exhorted to any thing, which is not expedient for young men to do. So that you muſt ſuppoſe the apoſtle was under ſome miſtake here, or elſe allow that yourſelves have ſome wrong conceptions, ſome miſapprehenſions of the matter, when you think of deferring it to a later day. This, I ſuppoſe, is a common, and often fatal error of the young. They are deſtroyed, not ſo much by any fixed, poſitive reſolution, that they never will be virtuous and ſober, as by procraſtination, or putting off the concerns of religion to a farther, and, as they fondly imagine, more convenient ſeaſon. I propoſe therefore, diſtinctly and clearly, though briefly, to lay open the abſurdity of ſuch a conduct. This is, in effect, what was mentioned in my firſt diſcourſe upon the ſubject, as the laſt branch of my general deſign; *viz.*

FOURTHLY, To ſhew you the extreme folly and danger of delaying to be ſober-minded, till you are farther advanced in years. That this is both fooliſh and dangerous to the laſt degree, ſhall be evinced by a variety of arguments; though I ſhall not enlarge upon them.†

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† Several of the enſuing arguments, which are here only juſt touched upon, are largely handled in the author's Sermons on Pſalm CXIX. 59, 60. *I thought on my ways—I made* HASTE, &c. Particularly in the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th of thoſe Sermons. This is one reaſon why they were not more fully treated here.

Now, it ſhould be obſerved here, that all thoſe arguments in general, which have been produced in favour of religion, are as concluſive with reſpect to the young, as they are with reſpect to the old. The force of them does not depend upon the particular age of people, any more than it does upon their particular complexion, ſtature or occupation in life. If you are but reaſonable, moral agents, the poſterity of Adam; and amongſt thoſe, to redeem and ſave whom Chriſt came into the world, all theſe arguments ſtand in full force; whether you are ten, twenty or fifty years old. You might ſay with as much truth and propriety, that it will be time enough for a ſlender man to be religious, when he is become corpulent; for a fair One, when he has been burnt a few years under the equator, or for an Æthiopian, when he has in part changed his ſkin; as ſay, that it will be time enough for you to be ſober-minded, when you are more advanced in years.

But to be a little more particular here: If to be truly religious, is in itſelf a reaſonable thing, as has been ſhewn; then it is ſo for all men at all times, in every ſeaſon of life, even from childhood to old age. You do, in effect, yourſelves acknowledge religion to be founded in nature and reaſon, by reſolving to practiſe it hereafter, under the notion of its being right, and your duty to do ſo. For, if it be not reaſonable, why will you practiſe it at all? Why do you not rather ſet up a bold reſolution at once, againſt all virtue and ſobriety; and determine in your own minds, that you *never* will fear, love or ſerve God? This you dare not, you cannot do; becauſe you know that you ought in all reaſon to love him, and keep his commandments. So that every day and hour of your continuance in ſin, you muſt be ſelf-condemned, as acting a part that is contrary to your own reaſon. Deny it if you can.

If ſobriety, or true religion, be honorable at all, it is ſo at all times; in youth as well as in age. The world in general, as has been ſhewn, pays reſpect to virtue and religion, under the notion of its being in nature fit, proper and reaſonable for mankind in common; not under the notion of its being proper only for this or that particular perſon, or perſons, of ſuch or ſuch an age. If you conſult your reputation therefore, you muſt reſolve to forſake your vices without delay, and to be ſober-minded from this very day: For all the time of your delay, you will juſtly lie under the imputation of folly and wickedneſs. And how great a reproach is that!

If there is any difference, religion is, of the two, more amiable and honorable in the young than in the old. For it is an indication of a mature judgment in that ſeaſon of life, which is ſo commonly devoted to levity and folly, to vanity and vice. It ſeems leſs praiſe-worthy in an old man to be wiſe and ſober, than for a young one: Though, on the other hand, vice and folly may ſeem rather more inexcuſable and ſhameful in the aged, than they are in the young.

If a virtuous and religious life is, beyond all compariſon, the moſt contented and happy one; then the earlier you enter upon ſuch a life, the better it will be for you; the more peace and comfort, the more real ſatisfaction and pleaſure you will enjoy in life. All the time that you continue ſtrangers to wiſdom and virtue, whether longer or ſhorter, you are putting a cheat upon, and defrauding yourſelves: You deprive yourſelves of that ſuperior and ſubſtantial happineſs, which flows from true religion; and ſubject yourſelves to the many vexations, miſchiefs, and uneaſy apprehenſions, which naturally attend folly and vice.

The ſooner you become wiſe and virtuous, the more ſerviceable you will be to the world; the better you will fill up your ſtations in life; the better you will anſwer the end of your creation, by doing good to your fellow-mortals. Society will be much more indebted and obliged to you, if you conduct yourſelves properly from your youth up, than if you begin to do ſo, only as a kind of *ceremony* at parting, and taking a final leave of it.

All the time you continue in the practice of ſin, you are acting a moſt ungrateful and diſingenuous part towards God, your

Father in heaven, and Jeſus Chriſt who died for you. You are all this time abuſing the divine goodneſs and patience; and grieving the holy Spirit; good angels above, and good men below: And alſo gratifying your worſt, your moſt implacable enemies, the devil and his angels.

You are all this time alſo, acting a moſt preſumptuous and audacious, as well as ungrateful part, towards your rightful Sovereign, the mighty God, the great and only Potentate. For you are all this while in a ſtate of rebellion againſt Him, before whoſe throne the holy angels veil their faces, and proſtrate themſelves with the profoundeſt reverence; and at the very thought of whom, thoſe apoſtate ſpirits who are in exile from heaven, tremble, and are horribly afraid.—So that in ſhort, it ſeems you have neither the filial love and reverence of the great God, which good angels have; nor ſo much awe and dread of his diſpleaſure, as the angels of darkneſs. How aſtoniſhing then, is your ingratitude on one hand, and your audacity on the other; while you continue reſolved and fearleſs in the violation of God's commandments!

REPENTANCE and reformation will, in all probability, be attended with more pain, anxiety and difficulty hereafter, than they would be at preſent; however you may flatter yourſelves to the contrary. Sin gains ſtrength by habit and cuſtom; the longer it is continued in, the more is the ſoul depraved, corrupted and enſlaved thereby. The habits of ſin are not ſo eaſily broken off, when they are old and inveterate, as when but newly contracted; as a confirmed tyranny in any nation, is harder to be broken than a novel and recent one. Agreeably whereto it is ſaid in ſcripture, " Can the Æthiopian " change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? " Then may ye alſo that are accuſtomed to " do evil, learn to do well." Which words, tho' they are not deſigned to aſſert the abſolute impoſſibility of breaking off inveterate evil habits, do yet very ſtrongly expreſs the great and peculiar difficulty of it.

The earlier you begin to be wiſe and virtuous, the more honor will, by your means, redound to God and religion. God is glorified by them that love and obey him, and order their converſation aright. The ſooner therefore any begin to do ſo, the more they will glorify him. And ought you not, in all reaſon, as far as poſſible to honor the great and good God, your heavenly Father, who daily loadeth you with his benefits?

The ſooner you begin to be ſober-minded, the greater progreſs you will make in true wiſdom, virtue and holineſs; and the greater moral perfection you will have attained to, when your lives ſhall come to a period. For true religion is in its nature progreſſive: It is like the light of the riſing ſun; which at firſt only glimmers faintly in the eaſt; then overſpreads the horizon, and "ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The ſooner you begin to ſerve God, and your generation according to his will; and the more perfect you are when you come to die in a good old age, the greater will be your reward and honor in the world to come. When all the righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father; you will appear with diſtinguiſhed luſtre and glory, proportionably to the degree in which you excelled others on earth, honoured God more, and did more good in the world.

You will obſerve, my young brethren, that all the arguments here touched upon, are grounded upon the ſuppoſition, not only that you may probably, but certainly will be ſober-minded hereafter, ſome time or other, tho' you ſhould perſevere a number of years longer in the practice of ſin and folly. They are all ſtrictly concluſive, even upon this ſuppoſition.

But I muſt now remind you, that this ſuppoſition is at beſt a very precarious one. You may have no more diſpoſition, no more inclination to, no more taſte for, wiſdom and virtue in old age, than you have now in your youth. Or rather, your averſion thereto may probably be increaſed inſtead of leſſened; tho' you ſeem to take it for granted, that wiſdom and ſobriety will come of courſe with years and age. This is one of the many devices of Satan, of which you ought not to be ignorant. You will naturally grow more hardened by continuing in ſin, as was intimated before. God may withdraw thoſe reſtraints, and kind influences of his Spirit, which you now in ſome meaſure enjoy; and give you up entirely to your own hearts luſt.—How many perſons are there who, tho' they had many checks of conſcience in youth, and a tenderneſs of heart in ſome degree; yet, when they come to middle or old age, appear to be quite hardened and ſtupified; to have loſt almoſt all ſenſe of moral good and evil, and are become profane ſcoffers at religion? There are not a few examples of this ſort in the world. You ſee then, that men do not always grow wiſer and better, but often wax worſe and worſe, with years. And what evidence? what rational grounds have you to conclude, that this will not be your own caſe, ſhould you now in youth ſtifle the convictions of your own minds; and reſiſt and quench the good Spirit of God, which is ſtriving with you? You have no ſort of evidence, however confident you may be, that you ſhall not be thus left of God; as many others *apparently* are.

Consider, in the next place, that while you delay to fear and ſerve God, you are continually adding to the number of your ſins, much too great already! and increaſing your guilt every day you live. For there is no medium betwixt doing right and wrong; betwixt ſerving God, and ſerving the devil and your luſts. If you do not the former, you will do the latter. And beſides; your ſins will not only become more numerous, but more aggravated, with your years; being committed againſt more light and knowledge, than thoſe of your childhood were.

AGAIN: Conſider, that if you ſhould die at laſt in your ſins, in a wicked old age; as is not improbable, if you ſhould live to be old, your future condemnation will be ſo much the more aggravated; and your puniſhment in the other world proportionably the greater. You are treaſuring up wrath to yourſelves, againſt the day of wrath. And the longer you live, if you ſhould at laſt periſh in your ſins, the worſe it will be for you. It is ſaid, not without a particular emphaſis, that "the ſinner of an hundred years old, ſhall be accurſed." In which reſpect, there have doubtleſs been many perſons who, inſtead of having eventually any cauſe for rejoicing that they lived ſo long, have rather had cauſe to wiſh that they had been "as an hidden untimely birth; as infants "which never ſaw the light!"

YOU will take notice, my young brethren, that every one of the foregoing arguments proceeds upon the ſuppoſition, that you will actually live to be old men! Even taking that for granted, there is not one of them but what is abſolutely concluſive in favour of being ſober-minded in youth. How ſtrong then, is the practical concluſion which reſults from them all in conjunction!

But I muſt now remind you, in the laſt place, that the forementioned ſuppoſition of your living till you are old, is much too favourable for you: It is a precarious, unſupported hypotheſis; ſuch an one as no perſon of the leaſt prudence or diſcretion would build upon, eſpecially when there is ſuch an intereſt at ſtake. Will you boaſt yourſelves of many years to come, or even of to-morrow, when you "know not what a day may bring forth"? What a ſtrange infatuation is this, however common! How many millions of millions of perſons younger than you, are already numbered with the dead in the duſt of the earth, not to ariſe again till theſe heavens are no more? How many of the companions of your childhood, of your friends, relations, and perhaps brethren and ſiſters, born after, are gone before you? (For in this ſenſe, as well as in divers others, "the firſt are often laſt, and the laſt firſt.") Some of whom were perhaps taken away by a ſudden violent ſtroke, without previous warning; and whoſe lives having been among the unclean, it were needleſs to ſay, that their death was not with the pure and holy, nor their portion with the bleſſed. Now, have you any aſſurance that you ſhall not yourſelves be thus ſuddenly ſnatched out of the world, while you are dreaming about being ſober-minded twenty or thirty, forty or fifty years hence; when you have ſufficiently fatigued yourſelves in the ſervice of Satan and your luſts! Has the God of your lives ?—has He in whoſe hand your breath is, and whoſe are all your ways, ever told you, that duſt and worms ſhall not cover you before grey hairs appear upon you ? You may be in the place of torment many years before the time comes, which you allot for reformation !

NOT one of you, however healthy, ſtrong and flouriſhing, tho' like a green bay tree in its prime, has any ſecurity that he ſhall not be ſuddenly cut down. For behold, even "now the axe is laid to the root of the trees;" and it cannot be long before "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire." Young and tender *ſapplings* fall more eaſily than trees come to maturity, and to a proper conſiſtence of parts : A ſmall ſtroke may lay them level with the earth. Yea, they may be mown down as the graſs, and the flower of the field, "which to day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven :" Nor are they ſo green, or full of ſap, but that a fire may be found fierce enough to burn them—In the language of the book of Job, "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days—He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down : He fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not." In the language of Moſes, we are "like graſs which groweth up. In the morning it flouriſheth, and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.—We ſpend our years as a tale that is told." In the language of David, "every man at his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity." In the language of Solomon, "Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work — in the grave whither thou goeſt—For man alſo knoweth not his time; as the fiſhes that are taken in an evil net," &c. And again, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not." — In the language of St. Peter, "All fleſh is as graſs, and all the glory of man, as the flower of graſs: The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever." And in the words of St. James, well worthy the attention of all, and particularly of thoſe of you, who are warmly engaged in worldly buſineſs, trafic and merchandize; "Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away."

You ſee then, my young brethren, the infinite importance, not only in general of being ſober-minded, but of being ſo immediately, without any delay; as for many other reaſons that have been mentioned, ſo particularly for this, that you have no ſecurity for another day, hour or moment. This being the caſe, how extremely fooliſh and dangerous is it to depend upon living many years! To day then, as the holy Ghoſt ſaith, even while it is called to day, harden not your hearts; leſt to-morrow ſhould not be a day of ſalvation, but of perdition to you! O that you were all wiſe; that you underſtood this, and duly conſidered your latter end! If you knew how frail you are, and numbered your days aright, it would be morally impoſſible for you, not to apply your hearts to that ſalutary wiſdom and ſobriety, to which you are exhorted.

It may be uſeful to you, my young brethren, if I here ſubjoin ſome ſhort counſels and cautions of a mixed nature; tho' divers of them may perhaps be near akin to ſome that are contained in the foregoing diſcourſes; and others only prudential. And,

1. Beware of irreligious, deiſtical books and men; leſt you ſhould be deluded by them to your ruin. Some there are in all ages, who, like the old ſerpent, tho' far leſs ſubtle, "lye in wait to deceive." There are many, who being either men of groſly depraved and profligate morals, cannot endure the reſtraints of religion; or elſe men of uncommon pride, affectation and vanity, ſet themſelves up as champions for infidelity. Theſe latter, not knowing how to diſtinguiſh themſelves as their ambition prompts them, by fair and laudable means, engage warmly in this black cauſe of impiety; aſſuming to themſelves the airs and importance of men of

uncommon penetration and ſagacity, merely on the credit of *affecting* to know more than others, and of contradicting what all the wiſeſt and beſt men in the world have believed. And how very knowing and learned muſt theſe gentlemen be, who have clearly diſcovered the errors and deluſions at leaſt, perhaps the knavery, of thoſe perſons, who have been in all ages the moſt celebrated for wiſdom, virtue and piety! What profound geniuſes? what enlightened, clarified and ſublime ſouls muſt theſe ſages have, who have ſo clearly detected the impoſture, or the folly and groſs ignorance of Moſes, Solomon and the prophets; of JESUS CHRIST and his apoſtles; of all our Boyles, Lockes, Clarkes, Newtons, Butlers, Hoadleys, Chandlers, Sherlocks, &c. &c.? Theſe muſt be very ſagacious gentlemen indeed! And how benevolent, magnanimous and glorious their attempts to undeceive mankind, and to deliver the world from the errors, the ſuperſtitions, and monſtrous notions about religion, taught by ſuch perſons!—What an ample field was here for the heroic exploits, and imaginary triumphs of vanity in a Collins, a Woolſton and a Tindal; in a Shaftſbury and a Morgan, a Chub and a Bolinbroke?—But it is, in effect, of ſuch men as theſe, of their ſophiſtical writings, declamations and documents, that Solomon counſels you to beware, saying, "Ceaſe, my Son, to hear the inſtruction that cauſeth to err from the words of knowledge."

2. GIVE your minds and attention chiefly to plain things in religion; to the obvious doctrines and duties of it; ſuch as are indiſputable, and ſuch as almoſt all chriſtians are, and ever were agreed in. For theſe are, without doubt, of the greateſt importance; and on the belief and practice of them, more eſpecially, does your preſent and future happineſs depend. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that the all-wiſe, good and merciful God, has made the eternal ſalvation of men depend upon niceties; upon abſtruſe ſpeculations, or things difficult to be underſtood. Hiſtory informs us that Caligula, one of the moſt cruel and infamous of the Roman Emperors, commanded his edicts, laws and orders to be written in ſuch ſmall, obſcure characters, and then fixed up ſo high, that it was next to impoſſible for people in general to read and underſtand them, that they might know his Majeſty's pleaſure. This he is ſaid to have done, on purpoſe to enſnare his ſubjects; that he might have an opportunity to embrue his hands in their blood as malefactors, under color of law and juſtice. It is ſaid of Baſilides, another infamous tyrant, that he would often impoſe the moſt unreaſonable and impracticable commands on his ſubjects; for example, that he would require One to bring him a pint, or large quantity of his ſweat in a veſſel, on a cold froſty morning; and another, to bring him a great number of fleas chained together in a particular manner, at a ſeaſon,

or in a country, wherein no fleas were to be found; and the like: And then put them to death for diſobedience. It is ſaid of Procruſtes, an infamous robber and petty tyrant, that he would, with great apparent kindneſs, condeſcention and humanity, invite people to lodge at his palace, or caſtle: And then cut off the feet and legs of ſome who were too tall, and ſtretch and torture others who were too ſhort, to make them juſt as long as the bed prepared for them. Now, the repreſentations often given us of God's dealings with men, ſuppoſe him to be really no better than an *almighty* Caligula, Baſilides or Procruſtes; or rather, to have all their particular bad qualities, and peculiar caprices united in himſelf. Thus do ſome, tho' I hope ignorantly, blaſpheme the all-wiſe, good and merciful God! Be all ſuch impious conceptions of him far from you, as it is from the Almighty that he ſhould do wickedly, or pervert juſtice and judgment! You may be aſſured that all of you, who ſincerely deſire to know and to do his will, in order to your eternal happineſs, may both know and do it, as far as is neceſſary to that end, by means of the light, help and grace which he affords to them that ſeek him. The truth and will of God, as far as your ſalvation is concerned in knowing it, is not obſcurely or darkly, but clearly revealed; ſo that "he that runs may read:" And the path of life, to an honeſt mind, is ſo plain, that "the way-faring men, tho' fools, can hardly err therein." There are however, doubtleſs, ſome things in the word of God, "hard to be underſtood." Neither, when I adviſe you to attend chiefly to thoſe that are plain and eaſy, do I mean that you ſhould not, as far as may be, acquaint yourſelves with the whole truth revealed; "that ye may ſtand perfect, and complete in the will of God."

3. You ſhould always interpret the more obſcure and difficult parts of ſcripture, in conſiſtence with thoſe that are plain. You ſhould rather forever confeſs your ignorance of the former, than underſtand them in a ſenſe repugnant to the latter; and then torture theſe plain ones, to make them agree with obſcure ones *miſunderſtood.* This has been a very common practice; particularly in ſome famous theological controverſies that might be mentioned: In which ſome zealous champions for unſcriptural myſteries, have indeed ſhewn a wonderful dexterity at "darkening counſel by words without knowledge."

4. If any of you ſhould have leiſure and inclination to acquaint yourſelves with the ſtate of thoſe controverſies, which now ſubſiſt in the chriſtian world; whether concerning doctrines, modes of worſhip, or eccleſiaſtic order and polity; you ſhould do it rather with a view to your private information and ſatisfaction, and for the regulation of your own conduct, than that you may be qualified for holding a diſputation upon theſe ſub-

jects. At leaſt, if you ſhould acquire any ſkill or ability in controverſy, which is a kind of *fencing*, and ſometimes even among the zealous fathers of the church, ended in murderous thruſts and blood : I ſay, if you ſhould acquire any ſkill in this art, you ſhould rather uſe it only upon occaſion, in your own neceſſary defence when attacked, (as honeſt and peaceable men ſometimes do ſwords) than carry it about with you to aſſail, or terrify others. It is ſeldom that any good, and often that much miſchief, comes of this kind of controverſy ; whether you call it playing, fencing or fighting : And, to " ſhew out of a good converſation your works with meekneſs of wiſdom, " will be much more to your honor and advantage, than the greateſt reputation you can poſſibly obtain in this way.

5. If you ſhould happen to differ in opinion in ſome reſpects, from moſt of thoſe among whom you live ; a degree of caution and reſerve may be prudent, expedient, and not inconſiſtent with chriſtian ſimplicity, or godly ſincerity : Eſpecially if the difference is not very important in its nature. Men in a private ſtation, and particularly young men, have no call to tell the whole world their particular opinions ; and much leſs, to make it a buſineſs to diſpute about them. By doing ſo, ſome have hurt their own intereſt very eſſentially, without doing the leaſt good to others: Eſpecially in times and places, wherein bigotry, a party-ſpirit, enthuſiaſm and cenſorioufneſs

ouſneſs have prevailed. You will find this very ſalutary counſel, if it ſhould *hereafter* be your lot to live in any country, where ſuch an abominable, antichriſtian ſpirit in the common people, is rather encouraged than diſcountenanced by many perſons in authority, and by numbers of the leading clergy;—by ſome, thro' ignorance, and a zeal not according to knowledge; and by others, from political, avaritious and worldly motives: Neither of which is an uncommon caſe in this evil world—But it is not the intent of any thing which I have ſaid, to adviſe you againſt ever entring into converſation upon diſputed points. Occaſionally to open your minds freely, and to diſcourſe upon them with people of candor and moderation, whom you know; not in the controverſial way, for vanity or victory, but merely for the ſake of receiving or giving information: This, I ſay, may be at once very agreeable and edifying to you. But remember, there are comparatively but few perſons, to whom your minds can be thus laid open, with prudence and ſafety. And therefore,

6. AT all times avoid, as far as poſſible, entering into any kind of religious diſpute with a hot enthuſiaſt, or with any of thoſe perſons, whoſe brains are half turned with ſyſtematical divinity; and whoſe *angry paſſions* are apparently engaged in defending the jargon, either of ancient ſymbols, or of more modern confeſſions of faith; all, of human invention, and ſome of them antiſcriptural.

Would you think either to convince ſuch men, "foaming out their own ſhame," or even to allay their intemperate heat, clamor and railing, by reaſoning with them ;— by ſober argument !— At leaſt, firſt try your talent at reaſoning ſome other way. For example ; try it firſt on a whirlwind ; then on the cataracts of Niagara, and next on the fiery eruptions of Veſuvius, Stromboli and Ætna. If the experiment ſucceeds ; if you can ſuſpend the fury and rage of all theſe, by the force of your reaſoning ; you will then have ſome encouragement to make trial of it upon ſuch men as the foaming enthuſiaſt, and the flaming bigot ; otherwiſe it is beſt for you to leave them to God, and endeavour to be, and keep *ſober* yourſelves.

7. Avoid all oſtentation in religion. Do nothing from a ſpirit of vain-glory ; eſpecially nothing that has any relation to religion ; but every thing, in lowlineſs of mind. Neither affect to appear righteous unto men ; but endeavour to do your duty in all reſpects, as in the ſight of God who trieth your hearts. "Be not righteous over-much ; neither make "yourſelves over-wiſe : why ſhould you de-"ſtroy yourſelves ?" * Every thing that is ſhewy, affected and oſtentatious in religion ; or done with an apparent deſign to make people think the doer very ſcrupulous, conſcientious, and eminently pious, is highly diſguſtful to perſons of true wiſdom and penetration ;

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* Eccl. VII. 17.

netration; and, which is far more, highly offenſive to God, who dwelleth with, and delighteth in, them that are of a lowly, humble and contrite ſpirit.

8. On the other hand, beware of falſe ſhame and modeſty; a common vice, and none of the leaſt. People are often aſhamed of their duty; ſometimes, only leſt fools ſhould laugh at and deride them for doing it; and ſometimes, perhaps, leſt others ſhould think they have not ſhame and modeſty enough. To be aſhamed, in any caſe, of what is right and fit to be done, and from that principle to omit it, is real impudence, and of the worſt kind; becauſe it is offending God, through baſhfulneſs with regard to man. To be ſure, never be aſhamed of your Saviour, "or of his words;" but confeſs both before men on all proper occaſions; leſt he ſhould alſo be aſhamed of you, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

9. Rest not ſatisfied with any profeſſion of religion, or in any ſuperficial reformation of manners: Reſt in nothing ſhort of Jeſus Chriſt, thro' faith that worketh by love, and which connotes that new birth, and new creature, ſpoken of in ſcripture. Every thing ſhort of this, will leave you deſtitute of chriſtian ſobriety; and therefore, in a ſtate of ſin, guilt and death. Beſides: Unfeigned faith in Chriſt as the redeemer of ſinners, purity of heart, and a ſupreme love to God, are neceſſary in order to your having any true de-

light in his ſervice, and enjoying the comforts of religion, or of the Holy Ghoſt, in this world. Religion will be rather a burthen, an uneaſy reſtraint to you, than your happineſs and delight, if you have no more of it than the form. She beſtows not her comforts, her divine joys, but on them that ſincerely love her, embrace her with their whole heart, and yield themſelves up unreſervedly to her heavenly influence and power. So long as your hearts are divided betwixt God and the world, they will be miſerably torn and tortured; you will be in doubts, in fears and darkneſs. But once give up all; once renounce every thing that ſtands in competition with God, and reſolve to follow the Lamb "whither ſoever he goeth;" then will you indeed find reſt unto your ſouls. Your eye being thus ſingle, your whole body ſhall be full of light; your ſouls, of heavenly peace, hope and comfort.

10. KEEP a particular watch and guard upon your *own* iniquity; upon the ſin that moſt eaſily beſets you, upon your conſtitutional, and moſt beloved luſt. All people in general have, either originally from nature, or from the circumſtances of their education, employment, or ſtation in life, ſome ſuch favourite luſt or paſſion; which is to them as a right hand, or a right eye: They know not how to part with it, till they are born of the Spirit; ſo dear it is to them. And even then, it is not always ſo far con-

quered, as to be upon the ſame level with other vices. The dethroned tyrant, that once reign'd without controul, loſes not all his power at once; but often ſtruggles to regain his former empire in the heart. In ſome perſons this tyrant is anger, in others envy; in others avarice, in others vanity or pride, in others uncleanneſs, in others intemperance in meat and drink; and ſo on. And whatever your own predominant paſſion is, you are reſpectively to keep a particular eye upon it. Till you have in ſome good meaſure got the maſtery of it, you are not to imagine yourſelves chriſtians: This is your particular trial, and a touch-ſtone of your ſincerity towards God.

BUT to draw near to the concluſion of this diſcourſe and ſubject together: I have, in the ſimplicity of my heart, been taking conſiderable pains to give you ſuch inſtructions, counſels and warnings; and to lay before you ſuch motives to ſobriety, as are agreeable to the word of God; all, with a ſincere view to your temporal and eternal good. I have borne it upon my own mind all along, that I am accountable to God for whatever I deliver to you as his word and will, and your duty to believe and practiſe: And that, if I wilfully or knowingly deliver to you any thing contrary thereto, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; I do it at the utmoſt peril of my own perdition. Let me remind you, on the other hand, my young brethren, that you are alſo accountable to God, our common Sovereign, for the reception which you give to his word and commandments, made known to you ; and, that if you wilfully diſregard or neglect them, your peril will be equally great. I therefore beſeech, as well as exhort you, to be ſober-minded. You will, probably, be either the better or the worſe in the end, for my diſcourſes to you upon this ſubject ; Which of them it ſhall be, depends, under God, upon yourſelves ; upon your remembring and obſerving, or forgetting and neglecting, what has been ſaid to you agreeably to the holy ſcriptures. And, from the general, and apparently ſerious attention which you have given, there ſeems to be more ground to hope the former, than to fear the latter : God grant, that the event may confirm, and eternally juſtify theſe hopes !

Before Him, the great, the all-knowing, impartial and almighty Judge of all, both you the hearers, and I the ſpeaker, muſt e'er long appear, to give an account of ourſelves reſpectively. We ſhall all, at the appointed time, appear before the tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt : For God hath "appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead." I am certain, that in that great day, I ſhall not be condemned by him for any wilful perverſion of his goſpel, either in my diſcourſes on this, or on any other ſubject; my own conſcience bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that in this reſpect at leaſt, I am innocent; clear from the blood of you and all men, whether old or young. See, my beloved brethren, See that you give ſuch a reception to the real, the undoubted doctrines and precepts of the goſpel, that you may, in reſpect of your own *practice*, have the like comfortable witneſs of your conſcience, and boldneſs in the day of judgment; leſt, otherwiſe, you ſhould be condemned with the world. Great will be your guilt, heavy your condemnation, inexpreſſible your miſery, if you ſhould perſevere in ſinning againſt light, conviction of the truth, and the dictates of your own conſciences! Glorious will be your recompence of reward at laſt, if you believe the word of God, and keep it.

YET a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. Methinks, almoſt, I already ſee the heavens which have received him, opening, and the Son of man deſcending in great power and glory! the judgment ſet! the books opened! the dead raiſed! the righteous appearing with ineffable joy and triumph; the wicked with unutterable woe and anguiſh! both preſaging, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, what their ſentence will reſpectively be!—O, my young brethren, where will you? — where ſhall I be found, when this great day of the Lord arrives?—a day ſo glorious to them that love

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his appearing; ſo dreadful to them that hate him, and diſobey his commandments!

LET me conclude with expreſſing the ſentiments and deſires of my heart, reſpecting both you and myſelf, in a ſhort prayer to Him that heareth prayer; as follows.

O THOU, of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom are all things; the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named! O, graciouſly behold theſe young men before thee; from the womb ignorant of, and therefore eſtranged from thee: But yet thy offſpring; formed by thy hand, animated by thy breath, and enlightened with a ray from the fountain of light in thee; born under the common law of mortality, thro' the offence of One, and naturally ſubject to the bondage of corruption; born to die in a few days, and yet to live forever; encompaſſed always with thy preſence, upheld by thy power, and living only in and by thee.

GREAT Creator and Father of all! who deſpiſeſt not the work of thine own hands; Thou who didſt faſhion them ſo wonderfully in the womb, and take them from it to behold the light! even thou haſt alſo nouriſhed them and brought them up as children, ſince they firſt hung upon their mothers breaſts. Thou haſt delivered them from many evils, and ſhielded them from unnumber'd dangers, thro' the feeble ſtates of infancy and childhood. Thou, on whom all eyes wait, who heareſt the young ravens when they cry, and before whom not a ſparrow is forgotten : Thou haſt ſupplied their natural wants from thy ſtores and treaſures, with a bountiful, a paternal hand ; and madeſt proviſion for their deliverance from ſin and death, and for their eternal happineſs, even before thou gaveſt them their being. In the fulneſs of time, according to thy gracious promiſe of old, thou didſt ſend forth thy Son, made and born of a woman ; who, by thy grace, hath taſted death for every man, to redeem them that were under the law ; and that we ſinners of the gentiles might alſo receive the adoption of ſons! From children they have had an opportunity to know the holy ſcriptures, which teſtify of thy Son, and which are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation, thro' faith which is in him.

O RIGHTEOUS Father ! they have indeed erred from thy ways ; they have ſinned, they have rebelled againſt thee. O give them now repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth which is after godlineſs. May they know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent, to the obtaining life eternal. Wherein they have erred from thy righteous paths, forgive, O moſt merciful Father ! forgive them, thro' the blood of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

Remember not againſt them the ſins of their youth; for childhood and youth are vanity. Father forgive them; for they knew not what they did! Thou conſidereſt their frame, thou remembereſt that they are duſt; and art not ſtrict to mark iniquity. Thou haſt ſaid by the mouth of thine holy apoſtles, that thou wilt have all men to be ſaved; and art not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come unto repentance; that they may receive the remiſſion of ſins, thro' Him that died for all, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God; and who is able to ſave them unto the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.

O HOLY Father! may theſe young men be ſanctified through thy truth; thy word is truth. Cleanſe them throughly from their ſins, from all unrighteouſneſs, from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, in the pure, the hallowed fountain which thou haſt opened. May they be holy, and without blame before thee in love, being followers of thee as dear children the remainder of their days on earth; that they may be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt appointed heir of all things.

O THOU who waſt, and art, and art to come; the ſame from everlaſting to everlaſting! behold, thou haſt made their days as an hand-breadth, and their age is as nothing before thee. Cauſe them therefore, whoſe life is as a vapour, as a flower, as a poſt that haſteth by; O cauſe them to know their end, and the meaſure of their days what it is; that, conſidering how frail they are, they may remember thee in the days of their youth; that they may even now apply their hearts unto wiſdom, and for the time to come, be ſober-minded according to thy word.

FATHER of lights, with whom there is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning; Eternal Source of truth and love! thy unworthy ſervant hath declared thy love and thy truth unto them, that they might both know and love thee. He hath ſown, not periſhing or corruptible, but the incorruptible ſeed; even thy word, O Lord, which liveth and abideth forever. Though ſown in weakneſs, may it be raiſed in power! Thou alone giveſt the increaſe, whoſoever ſoweth, or planteth, or watereth. O cauſe this good ſeed, tho' ſo unſkilfully ſown, to take deep and effectual root in all their hearts, however hard any of them may be, thro' the deceitfulneſs of ſin; that it may ſpring up ſpeedily, and grow, firſt the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear, a goodly and plenteous harveſt of the fruit of righteouſneſs, to the glory of thy great name by Jeſus Chriſt; to their own peace, honor and happineſs here, and to their eternal felicity in thy kingdom which is above.

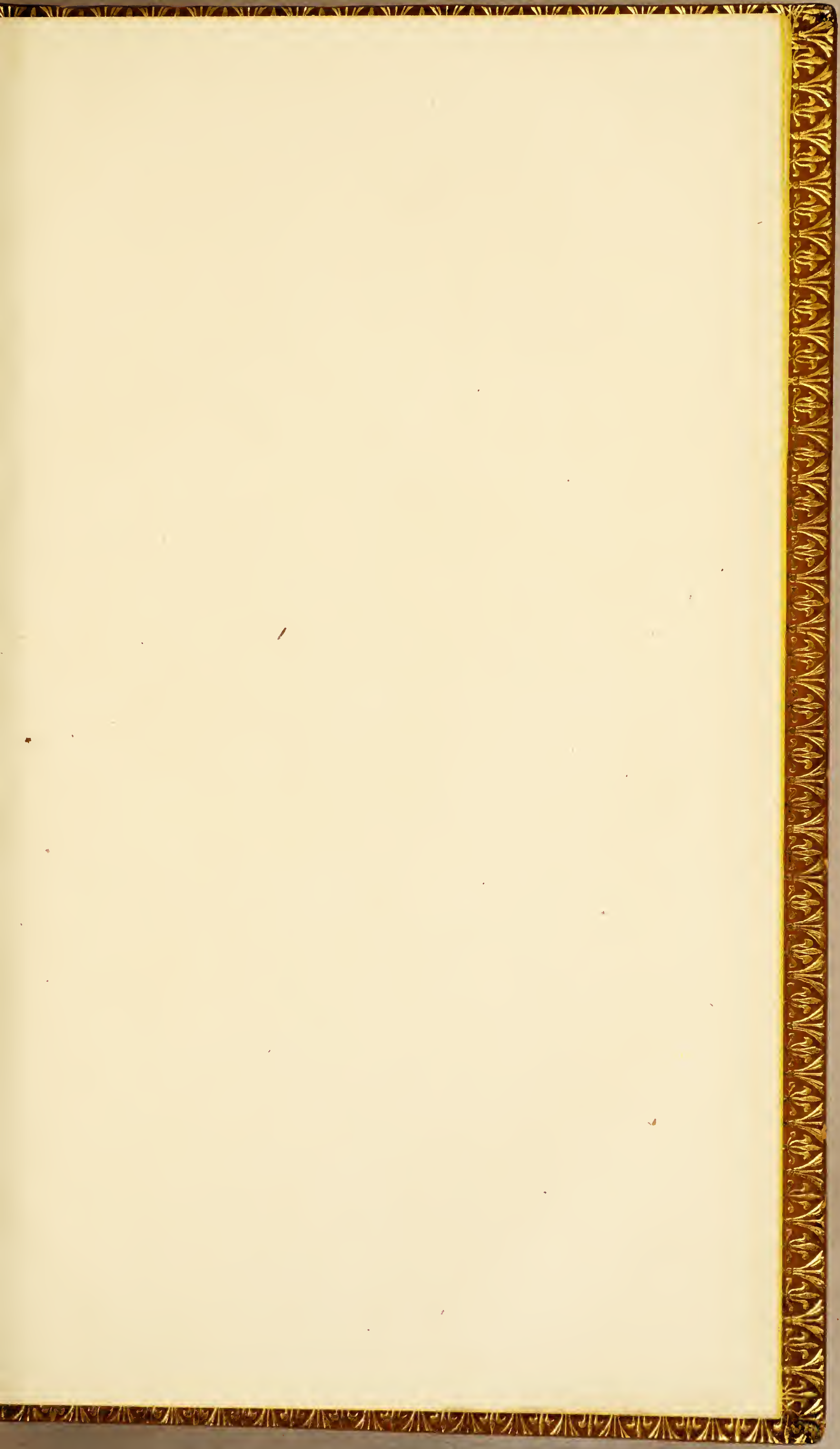
PERFECT the good work already begun in any of them, unto the day of Chriſt: Keep them from falling, that they may in due time appear in thy glorious preſence with exceeding joy. And grant, O heavenly, moſt holy and moſt gracious Father! grant that thy unworthy ſervant, having preached to others, may not himſelf be a caſt-away! May he with them, tho' ſo unworthy of thy favourable regards, yet thro' thy unutterable love and grace in Chriſt Jeſus, be found at laſt at his right hand, whom thou haſt made the Lord and Judge of all. With them, and with thy unworthy, tho' not wholly unfaithful ſervant, it is a very ſmall thing that they ſhould be judged of man's judgment, or have their names caſt out as evil: He that judgeth them, and all, whoſe judgment is at once true, impartial and deciſive, is the Lord.

In that great day, therefore, O my God! when the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall to the earth, even as a fig-tree ſhaketh her untimely figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty wind; when the heavens ſhall depart as a ſcroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and iſland ſhall be moved out of their places; when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man; when all who have killed, perſecuted, or maliciouſly condemned the juſt; when all who have rejected and diſobeyed thy ſacred word, or knowingly perverted it, thro' the love or fear of this preſent world, ſhall hide themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and ſhall ſay to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that ſitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: In that great day, O my God! may thy moſt unworthy ſervant, may theſe young men, may all that are here aſſembled in thy houſe of prayer, of whatever age, ſex or degree, having believed and obeyed thy truth in ſimplicity, the truth as it is in Jeſus, have great peace and boldneſs! May even the leaſt of them have then no occaſion to "hide "themſelves in the dens and in the rocks of "the mountains; or to ſay to the mountains "and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from "the face of him that ſitteth upon the throne, "and from the wrath of the Lamb!" O grant that, in that day, the leaſt as well as greateſt of us may lift up our heads with joy; knowing that He who loved us, and whom not having before ſeen we loved, together with our complete redemption, is come: And may, with the general aſſembly, the church of the firſt born, and the innumerable company of angels, with loud, joyful and triumphant voices, aſcribe bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. For worthy, O GREATEST and BEST of Beings! Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and hath redeemed us unto GOD by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory and bleſſing. AMEN!

CORRECTIONS.

Page,	*line,*	*from,*	*read,*
24	3	top	of the truth.
65	15	top	“ gather together
81	13	bottom	PREACHER
94	8	bottom	on the
102	14	bottom	Indeed, in any
124	4	top	ſhall he not hear
128	Margin, laſt line,		before the time of Moſes.
135	20	bottom	ſays ver. 7. [*dele* and]
142	12	top	to hear
146	Margin 6	bottom	perſecutors
169	9	bottom	folly, impudence
172	16	bottom	that muſt be,
220	9	top	beaſts
237	8	top	you ſee a
252	4	bottom	that it is holy
283	15	bottom	grateful reception
285	5	top	ſelf-deſtroyed

☞ SOME ſlips in the ſpelling and pointing are omitted.



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